AMERICAN ACTORS

SERIES OF A.C.

MRS. DUFF

JOHN RELAND

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American Actor Series

EDITED BY LAURENCE HUTTON

AMERICAN ACTOR SERIES

MRS. DUFF

BY

JOSEPH N. IRELAND

With Illustrations

BOSTON
JAMES R. OSGOOD AND COMPANY
1882

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Look up, my masters, we have lost a star!

. . . . .

I looked . . . the star was gone,
And nothing marked in heaven where she had shone.

. . . . .

She shall not pass without her requiem.

. . . . .

She, lost gem,
Shall be remembered; though she sought not fame,
It shall be busy with her beauteous name.

JEAN INGELOW.

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From a Daguerreotype.

INTRODUCTORY.

If it be due to pre-eminent merit, guided and glorified by the highest histrionic genius, that its career should be held in remembrance and its fame perpetuated by a record more permanent and accessible than the mere newspaper notices of the day, then a debt has long been owing to the memory of Mrs. Duff, which all the resources of her present biographer, however faithfully applied, will be quite inadequate to discharge.

Acknowledged without dispute for many years as the first tragic actress of our stage, it is certain that she had never been equalled by any predecessor, and very doubtful if she has been surpassed, even by a Rachel or a Ristori, among those who have succeeded her.

She was endowed by nature with every mental faculty and every physical requisite for pure tragedy; and in that distinct line, and in that line only, education and experience raised her (in the opinion of the writer) to the highest rank ever attained on the stage of America. She possessed a person of more than medium height, and of the most perfect symmetry, — not so commanding, perhaps, as that of Mrs. Siddons,

but far more available, in her maturer years, for the youthful heroines of the drama, and far more graceful and pleasing to the eye than Miss Cushman ever possessed. Her face, called beautiful in her girlhood, throughout life was irradiated by eyes of the darkest hue and most speaking intelligence. The varying expression of her features has never been surpassed; while her voice was as soft and musical, in its quiet tones, as (we are told) was that of Mrs. Cibber, — wild and plaintive in its ejaculations of distraction and despair, yet resonant and thrilling in its forceful utterances. It was admirably adapted to the sorrows of the rustic heroines of domestic life — such as *Annette* in "The Maid and Magpie," or *Mary* in "The Innkeeper's Daughter" — as well as to the touching and exquisitely natural madness of *Ophelia*, the stormy grief of *Constance*, the grander suffering of *Lady Macbeth*, and the very tempest and whirlwind of contending passion embodied in her unrivalled *Hermione*.

Unfortunately for Mrs. Duff's reputation in New York, she attained distinction and popularity in Boston and Philadelphia before being introduced to the stage of the Metropolis. New York, like London, can sometimes be jealous of her sister cities, and does not like to be called upon to worship the idol of another and a smaller place; and, therefore, although critical judgment pronounced her worthy of the highest praise, the public — with honorable exceptions — finding that she bore no foreign endorsement, looked upon her simply as the favorite of a provincial town, and did not greet her advent with that general and enthusiastic welcome she

so well deserved. The few who saw her were charmed with her personations, but fashion could not be induced to interest itself in her behalf, or to crowd the house when her name was first announced. She was heartily applauded but not numerously followed; and, although she finally won her way to every heart, she never became an attraction powerful enough to secure a permanent engagement in New York's leading theatre.

Pronounced by the elder Booth to be the best actress in the world; rebuked by the elder Kean for attracting from him his proper share of the night's applause; complimented by Cooper and Forrest as the most desirable coadjutress with whom they had ever been associated; playing with the elder Conway to be proclaimed his superior; acknowledged openly before Judge Irving, in the New York Court of Common Pleas, by William M. Price (an eminent lawyer, and brother of Stephen Price, the lessee of the old Park Theatre,) to be "*the most distinguished actress in this or any other country;*" honored by Horace Greeley's printed opinion that her *Lady Macbeth* has never since been equalled; and sustained by the criticisms of the entire press of the Union, — Mrs. Duff possessed higher testimonials of ability than have ever been awarded to any other actress on the American stage; and these have been reinforced by the testimony of that glorious artist and thoroughly competent judge, John Gilbert, who at the present day asserts that she was, without exception, the most exquisite tragic actress he ever saw.

Except as her professional duties required her appearance before the public, she shunned the gaze of the outer world, and in rural retirement sought enjoyment congenial to her taste. Her hours of leisure were consecrated to the care and instruction of her numerous children, and her devotion to them and to her husband was the constant theme of remark and admiration among her personal friends.

Retiring from public life ere age had dimmed her marvellous powers, abjuring the Roman Church, in which she had been educated, and devoting herself earnestly and faithfully to the service of the Methodist Communion in a distant section of our country, Mrs. Duff successfully eluded all intercourse with those who would have addressed her as an actress, and at last sunk into the grave, unknown to her old friends and associates who, with affectionate regard, would proudly though mournfully have laid her down in honor to her last repose.

The few memorials of her private and professional life that have reached the writer are of so interesting a character that he places them on record for the benefit of the reader of theatrical biography, in the endeavor to preserve green and fresh the name and the memory of one who was certainly the most intellectual and accomplished actress of her day.

MRS. DUFF.

1794–1809.

Attached to the Dublin Theatre in the year 1809, in the capacity of dancers, were three young and lovely girls bearing the name of Dyke. Of their previous history little is known. They were not (as frequently has been asserted) natives of Ireland, but daughters of an English gentleman who held a position in the service of the East India Company; and they were all born in London, the eldest, our heroine, Mary, in the year 1794. Their father died abroad, leaving them a scanty heritage, and under the supervision of their mother they were prepared for the commencement of a stage career by the celebrated D'Egville, ballet-master of the King's Theatre, London.

Their first public essay appears to have been made on the boards of the Dublin Theatre, where their singular grace, beauty, and modesty attracted immediate attention and admiration.

It was the fashion of the time at Kilkenny for gentleman amateurs to give annual public performances for the benefit of the poor of the city; and it was on one of these occasions, when the assistance of professional

ladies from Dublin was invoked, that Moore, the Irish poet, was introduced to Mary Dyke, and immediately found himself passionately in love with her. We have not seen a programme of this performance in which Miss Mary Dyke took part; but one for the succeeding year dated Monday, Oct. 1, 1810, after she had departed for America, now lies before us. It contains the names of her sisters and announces the tragedy of "Coriolanus," with Mr. Becher, afterwards Sir William Wrixon Becher, and husband of the celebrated Miss O'Neill, as *Coriolanus;* Mr. George Ponsonby as *Menenius;* Lieutenant Walker, R. N., as *Sicinius;* Mr. R. Power as *Tullus Aufidius;* Miss Walstein, the reigning favorite of Dublin, as *Virgilia;* Miss Locke as *Volumnia;* Miss Elizabeth Dyke as *Valeria;* and Miss Ann Dyke as *Servilia.* In the afterpiece of "Fortune's Frolic" Moore himself personated *Robin Roughhead,* and Miss E. Dyke, *Nancy.* It may be mentioned that at this time Moore, having been disappointed in his hopes of obtaining the eldest of the family, had transferred his affections to Elizabeth Dyke, the second sister, whom he soon after married. How far Mary Dyke may have encouraged Moore's addresses cannot now be ascertained; but it is certain that she rejected his offers of marriage, — a circumstance that gave rise to the composition of the celebrated song herewith annexed.

Mary, I believed thee true,
And I was blessed in thus believing;
But now I mourn that e'er I knew
A girl so fair and so deceiving, —
Fare thee well!

Few have ever loved like me, —
  Yes, I have loved thee too sincerely!
And few have e'er deceived like thee, —
  Alas! deceived me too severely.

Fare thee well! yet think awhile
  On one whose bosom bleeds to doubt thee,—
Who now would rather trust that smile
  And die with thee than live without thee.

Fare thee well! I'll think of thee;
  Thou leav'st me many a bitter token;
For see, distracting woman, see,
  My peace is gone, my heart is broken! —
    Fare thee well!

Moore was a man of the world, accustomed to the society of ladies both in Dublin and London; and there must have been something extremely fascinating about these young girls, scarcely half his own age, to have induced him to make them successively proposals of marriage. He appears to have been throughout life devotedly attached to his wife, who proved to be a most amiable and domestic woman; and he never omits an opportunity in his "Diary and Letters" to speak of her in terms of the highest admiration. His Diary, which is said to have been carefully prepared by himself for posthumous publication, contains no allusion to the first-loved sister, however; and a letter from the Right Honorable Earl Russell, who acted as its editor, assures us that he has no remembrance of her name occurring in any of his papers, although Mrs. Moore in her letters makes frequent allusion to the Dyke family. The latter may be dismissed from further

consideration here, with the remark that Ann Dyke, the youngest sister, married William Murray, who was the brother of Mrs. Henry Siddons, and for thirty years manager of the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh. Mrs. Murray, like her elder sisters, was noted for her beauty and accomplishments, but unfortunately she died soon after her marriage.

1810–1812.

The cause of Mary Dyke's rejection of Moore was soon discovered in an attachment she had formed for John R. Duff, a young actor connected with the Dublin Theatre, who has been described as an Apollo in person and as a Crichton in accomplishments. He had been a classmate of Moore in Trinity College, and was intended for the practice of law, but he was fascinated by the allurements of the stage, and finally became an actor by profession. Showing promise of distinction, he was recommended by Cooper the tragedian, who saw him in Dublin, to Messrs. Powell and Dickson of the Boston Theatre, by whom he was immediately engaged. Having married Mary Dyke before she had completed her sixteenth year, he embarked with her for America, and made his first appearance at the old Federal Street Theatre in Boston, Nov. 2, 1810, as *Octavian* in the play of "The Mountaineers," and as *Baron Willinghurst* in the musical farce called "Of Age To-morrow." The critics of the day stated that high expectations had been formed of his abilities, and that those expectations were, without exception, fully realized. His second appearance was

made in the characters of *Gossamer* and *Jeremy Diddler*, in which his success was even more pronounced. These were followed by *Young Norval*, *Belcour* in the "West Indian," *George Barnwell*, *Tekeli*, *Tangent*, *Werter*, and on the 30th by *Hamlet*, — the last eliciting the following comments from the *Boston Gazette*: —

"The *Hamlet* of Mr. Duff, though in many parts, particularly the Closet scene, remarkably well performed, will not be ranked among the characters in which he is destined to make a shining figure. His forte is genteel and sprightly comedy; or, if he puts on the buskin, it should be to impersonate the lighter kind of impassioned heroes."

A subsequent performance of the character drew forth the following from the *Boston Centinel*: —

"We were much pleased with the personation of *Hamlet* by Mr. Duff, and we do not hesitate to say that in some of the scenes — and those of no ordinary grade of difficulty — he has never been excelled on the Boston boards."

Whatever difference of opinion may have existed as to his merit in particular parts, he soon became the acknowledged favorite of the Boston public, and for many years retained their highest esteem. The maturer judgment of his critics awarded him his greenest laurels for his successes in light comedy; but he was an actor of extraordinary versatility, unequalled on our stage save by Hodgkinson, and surpassed in London only by Elliston, whom he is said to have resembled more closely than any other actor.

For imperative reasons Mrs. Duff's début was de-

ferred until the 31st of December, 1810, when she first attempted, on any stage, the personation of Shakespeare's most difficult character of *Juliet*. The cast of the tragedy on this occasion may be not without interest, and is therefore given in full: —

Romeo	Mr. Duff.
Mercutio	Mr. Bernard.
Tybalt	Mr. Darley.
Paris	Mr. Vaughan.
Benvolio	Mr. Robertson.
Capulet	Mr. Barnes.
Friar Laurence	Mr. Drake.
Friar John	Mr. Graham.
Peter	Mr. Entwistle.
Apothecary	Mr. Fisher.
Balthazar	Mr. Henry.
Page	Miss Worrall.
Lady Capulet	Mrs. Drake.
Nurse	Mrs. Barnes.
Juliet	Mrs. Duff.

Bernard was the celebrated and favorite English comedian whose "Retrospections" have furnished so much entertainment to all readers of theatrical books; Darley was the handsome father of our modern artist of the name, but his talents were more conspicuous in the vocal than the tragic line; Mr. and Mrs. Drake were the grandparents of the since distinguished Julia Dean; Entwistle was a newly arrived and very popular comedian; Mr. Henry was the father of the beautiful Mrs. George Barrett; but Mr. and Mrs. Barnes were *not* Mr. and Mrs. John Barnes, the special favorites of New York, who did not arrive in America until 1816.

Mrs. Duff's first representation of *Juliet*, a character in which she afterwards became famous, was not a failure — neither was it a brilliant success. Mr. Clapp writes: "A more beautiful woman had not trod the stage, and so far as the making-up and *personnel* were concerned, a more attractive *Juliet* had never appeared, but the 'spirit' seemed wanting. Her style was indifferent, and she lacked both conception and power." It must be remembered that Mrs. Duff was then but sixteen years of age, and that experienced critics have asserted that no woman is competent to play *Juliet* till she is too old to look the part. The contrast between the earlier and latter portions of the character is so great that few juvenile artists are enabled to blend harmoniously the two extremes. Her next appearance was on the 3d of January, 1811, when she played *Lady Anne* to the *Richard III.* of no less an actor than George Frederick Cooke, the greatest tragedian who had then trod our stage, — following it with *Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt* to the veteran's *Sir Pertinax MacSycophant*, *Charlotte* to his *Sir Archy MacSarcasm*, and *Lady Percy* to his *Falstaff*. She was cast for many important second characters in the plays that were presented, and a few leading ones, — among others *Miranda* to her husband's *Marplot* in "The Busy Body," and *Eliza Ratcliff* to Bernard's excellent representation of *Sheva*, in "The Jew." She also appeared as the heroines of the two serious pantomimes of "Oscar and Malvina" and "Brazen Mask" — very popular entertainments in their day; and the grace and expressiveness of her pantomimic action met with the highest commendation.

On the 29th of April, 1811, occurred the first benefit in America of Mr. and Mrs. Duff, the bill for which is produced entire: —

THE HONEYMOON.

Duke Aranza	Mr. Duff.
Rolando	Mr. Robertson.
Count Montalban	Mr. Vaughan.
Balthazar	Mr. Drake.
Jacques	Mr. Entwistle.
Lampedo	Mr. Dickinson.
Lopez	Mr. Roberts.
Juliana	Mrs. Powell.
Volante	Mrs. Doige.
Zamora	Mrs. Duff.
Hostess	Mrs. Barnes.

RECITATION, Collins's "Ode on the Passions," by Mrs. Duff, with appropriate music and action.

A *Pas Seul*, by Mrs. Duff.

A *Pas de Deux* from "Oscar and Malvina," by Mrs. Duff and Mr. Fisher.

To conclude with

THREE AND THE DEUCE.

Pertinax, Percival, and Peregrine Single	Mr. Duff.
Justice Touchit	Mr. Drake.
McFloggan	Mr. Bernard.
Humphrey Grizzle	Mr. Entwistle.
Frank Woodbin	Mr. Fisher.
Monsieur Renard	Mr. Darley.
Pinch	Mr. Stockwell.
Cramp	Mr. Graham.
Emily	Mrs. Doige.
Phœbe	Mrs. Darley.
Taffline	Mrs. Graupner.

In the last named piece Mr. Duff made a most extraordinary hit, and his representation of the *Three Singles*, became his most popular effort. We know of his performing them more than eighty times, and he doubtless gave many repetitions of which we have no record. To those who knew Mrs. Duff only in after years, the idea of her executing a *pas seul* and other dances, as a benefit attraction, must seem ludicrously strange ; yet it would appear that in ballet and pantomime (the latter was very different in plot and construction from those at present in vogue) she had made her strongest impression on the Boston audience, while to her husband were assigned all the laurels of the legitimate drama.

With one or two more characters, especially that of *Victoria* in Mrs. Cowley's "Bold Stroke for a Husband," Mrs. Duff ended her first season in America. In July the Boston company made its annual migration to Providence, R. I., and here she found a wider sphere for the exercise of her talents. The lovely and winning Mrs. Darley, the late leading "juvenile lady," having retired from the ranks, Mrs. Duff succeeded to most of her characters. She here first played *Ophelia* to her husband's *Hamlet*, *Statira* to his *Alexander the Great*, and *Charlotte* to his *Werter*. She repeated *Juliet* with more success, and on the 31st of July made a marked hit as *Morgiana* in the "Forty Thieves," her trained skill as a dancer lending a great and hitherto unknown elegance to the part. On the 7th of August she first essayed *Desdemona* (Mr. Duff playing *Othello*), and on the 12th made her first attempt as *Jane Shore*,

which, in after-life, was thought by many to be her best performance. During the season, which extended to the 27th of September, she also personated, for the first time, *Edmond* in the favorite melodrama of "The Blind Boy," *Lady Trueman* in Addison's old comedy of "The Drummer," *Cora* in "Pizarro" (in which her efforts met with much applause), *Marianne* in "The Dramatist," *Lady Priory* in "Wives As They Were," and *Grace Gaylove* in "The Review." She and her husband also appeared as the heroine and hero of a now entirely forgotten play by John Howard Payne, entitled "Mazeppa, the Hetman of the Ukraine," a very different production from the more modern drama of the same name. Her youth, beauty, simplicity of manner, melodious voice, and faithful earnestness of endeavor during this season established her as a favorite in Providence, and throughout her whole career she was ever there a welcome visitor.

Her second season in Boston commenced on the 14th of October, 1811, with her performance of the light-hearted *Emily* to her husband's *Gossamer* in Reynolds's "Laugh When You Can," a character she soon after exchanged for the matronly and sorrowing *Mrs. Mortimer* in the same comedy. She next appeared as the innocent and interesting *Orilla* in Dimond's "Adrian and Orilla, or a Mother's Vengeance." On the 20th of November she made a decided impression in her first really original character, that of the devoted daughter, *Alexina*, in Reynolds's play of "The Exile," then first performed in Boston, where it was represented many times. She also repeated her charming perform-

ance of *Morgiana* with increased effect. In the succeeding months she again supported Mr. Cooke during his engagements, and appeared for the first time as *Leonora* to his *Zanga* in Dr. Young's tragedy of "The Revenge." On the 10th of February, 1812, she played *Ophelia* to the *Hamlet* of John Howard Payne, then in the height of his popularity; and, soon after, *Sigismonda* to his *Tancred* in Thomson's not very successful tragedy of "Tancred and Sigismonda." Illness then for a fortnight detained her from her duties, but on the 28th she reappeared as *Cinderella* in the ballet pantomime of that name; a part which was "elegantly represented," according to the Boston papers, and repeated for six successive nights, — a most prosperous run for those days.

Mr. Duff now made a journey to Philadelphia and opened there as *Macbeth* and *Jeremy Diddler* to a house of one hundred and twenty-three dollars, which was followed by a continuous increase of receipts until his benefit night, when they exceeded eleven hundred dollars. His performances gave entire satisfaction and the press was unanimous in the wish that he might soon form a component part of the Philadelphia Theatre. On his return to Boston he was announced as *Daran* to Mrs. Duff's *Alexina* in "The Exile." The Gazette, in noticing his reappearance, remarked that he had been eminently successful in Philadelphia, and asserted that he possessed a versatility of talent not to be found in any other actor on this side of the Atlantic. On the 30th of March, Morton's unfortunate failure, "The Knight of Snowdoun" (from Scott's "Lady of

the Lake") was first played in Boston, — Mr. Duff performing *Roderick Dhu* (a character which in Eyre's subsequent version of the poem he made for years exclusively his own) and Mrs. Duff, *Ellen Douglas*.

For their joint benefit on the 20th of April Mr. Duff appeared as *Leon* in "Rule a Wife and Have a Wife," as *Sylvester Daggerwood*, and as *Looney McTwolter* in "The Review"; while Mrs. Duff's name is set down only for *Grace Gaylove* in the farce, even the attraction of her dancing being omitted. She was however called on to execute a *pas seul* for stately Mrs. Powell's benefit on the 4th of May, on which night she closed her second dramatic season in Boston, in the interesting character of *Rose Sidney* in Morton's comedy of "Secrets Worth Knowing."

Mr. and Mrs. Duff now joined the company of Messrs. Warren and Wood, of the Philadelphia and Baltimore Theatres, in whose service they remained permanently for five years. Mr. Duff made his début in Baltimore, May 20, 1812, as *Macbeth* and *Jeremy Diddler*, the same characters in which he first presented himself at Philadelphia, and with the same success. Mrs. Duff's first appearance in Baltimore was as *Zamora* in "The Honeymoon." On their benefit night she appeared as *Malvina* in "Oscar and Malvina," Mr. Duff personating *Carrol* in that piece, as well as the *Three Singles* and *Sylvester Daggerwood*.

They next visited Washington where the prospect of a successful season was clouded by the declaration of war against Great Britain. From June 16 to August 10, however, they were constantly employed

in leading parts, and on their benefit night Mr. Duff appeared as *Rolla* and *Petruchio*, and Mrs. Duff as *Cora*.

The company opened in Philadelphia in the following September, with Mr. Duff as *Octavian* and *Jeremy Diddler*, and on the 3d of October Mrs. Duff made her first appearance there as *Angela* in "The Castle Spectre." Mr. W. B. Wood says: "At this time she was very pretty, but so tame and indolent as to give no hope of the improvement we afterwards witnessed. Mr. Duff's salary was six guineas a week,* and he often played, on his sole attraction, to houses of seven or eight hundred dollars, and brought more positive profit to the house in two years than any star who visited us. His benefit, for which he performed *Coriolanus*, brought fifteen hundred and seventy-four dollars, which greatly exceeds most of Cooke's, Kean's, or Mathews's. For his wife's benefit he personated *Richard III.* (in imitation of and precisely after the manner of Cooke) to Mrs. Duff's *Lady Anne*, the receipts being nine hundred and forty-nine dollars."

* Mr. J. T. Buckingham, in the *Boston Polyanthos* for March, 1812, says that Mr. Duff's successful exertions in Philadelphia "have secured him an engagement there for the next season, with a salary of fifty-six dollars a week." This probably was the joint salary of himself and wife. Small, indeed, compared with terms of the present day, but liberal for the time. Mr. Thomas Barry, well known in Boston, assured the writer that in 1827 when "leading man" in the Park Theatre, New York, his salary was but five pounds a week, until he assumed the duties of stage management.

1813–1816.

On the 1st of January, 1813, Mr. Duff appeared as *Marmion* in J. N. Barker's spirited adaptation of Scott's poem, then first placed upon the stage. He met with great success in this character, in which his portrait was painted by Neagle and engraved by A. B. Durand. Mrs. Duff represented *Clara de Clare* efficiently. She as yet had developed but little force, and her most successful representations were confined to characters requiring loveliness of person, with expressive simplicity and pathetic tenderness of delineation, like *Jessy Oatland*, *Mary Thornberry*, and *Emily Worthington*, in which she was very favorably received.

During their residence in Philadelphia Mrs. Mason (afterwards Mrs. Entwistle) was deservedly the favorite and principal comedienne, and Mrs. W. B. Wood the leading tragic actress. As Mr. Wood looked upon his wife as the only lady required for the tragic department, and as Mrs. Duff had little mirthfulness or gayety in her composition, her chances for prominent characters were very few; nevertheless, she was occasionally entrusted with *Ophelia* and *Cordelia*, as well as *Lady Percy*, *Lady Anne*, *Floranthe*, and a few others. She also played *Edmond* in "The Blind Boy" and *Julio* in "Deaf and Dumb," characters of which Mrs. Charles Kemble was the celebrated original in London, and the latter of which was last played in New York by the fascinating Mademoiselle Celeste. Mrs. Duff's beautiful figure enhanced the charm of her acting as boys and pages, in which line she soon became an

acknowledged favorite. Mr. Duff however was the main attraction, and his excellent performances as *The Ethiop*, *Marmion*, *Roderick Dhu*, *Abœllino*, *Tekeli*, and other striking melodramatic heroes, added to his high reputation as well as to the treasury of the theatre.

A grand array of histrionic talent was congregated in Philadelphia at this period. Duff and Wood were the leading favorites in the highest departments. Warren, father of the William Warren of to-day, was the most perfect "old man" of comedy or tragedy then known in America; and Jefferson (grandfather of the present Jefferson), a most distinguished comedian, was at home in every branch of humor. Francis was an excellent "second comic old man" and an efficient director of the ballet, and his wife was the best "old woman" and "chambermaid" of that time. "Gentleman" George Barrett was there in all the freshness of his youth and almost in all the maturity of his excellence, the eloquent Cone (afterwards a Baptist clergyman, and grandfather of the present Kate Claxton), Blissett (the most admirable of all artists in small comedy or French parts), Mrs. Wood, Mrs. Mason, Mrs. Barrett, Sr., Mrs. Jefferson, Mrs. W. Green (formerly the lovely Miss Willems, whose only daughter was burned in the Richmond Theatre in 1811), our own fair heroine, and a numerous corps of secondary rank, formed a company stronger in every department than either New York or Boston could boast.

In calling attention to Mr. Duff's benefit in 1813, the *Philadelphia Aurora* said: "Never have we seen

such variety and contrast of character, united with so much excellence in all, as we have seen in the performances of Mr. Duff. Never do we recollect so great a loss, as that of the drama in the death of Cooke, so immediately and so admirably compensated. It is not indeed Cooke, nor Cooke's cast of manner and personification, but it is another planet in a larger orbit, and so incomparable in what he does that pleasure and applause are invariably associated with his appearance."

1817.

Mr. and Mrs. Duff continued with the Philadelphia managers until July 1817, ever attractive and in receipt of liberal benefits. During their long engagement they occasionally appeared in the same plays with the celebrated Mrs. Whitelock (sister of Mrs. Siddons), Mr. Holman and daughter (afterwards Mrs. Gilfert), Mr. Cooper, the distinguished amateur Gouverneur Bibby, and other prominent performers.

During occasional vacations Mr. Duff revisited Providence on a starring engagement, and also presented himself with success for the first time to the audiences of New York and Albany.

Mr. and Mrs. Duff now rejoined the Boston Company, the former becoming associated in its management with Messrs. Powell and Dickson. In a preliminary season at Providence Mrs. Duff made her first appearance in five years, Sept. 1, 1817, as *Rosalie Somers*, the once interesting (but now called insipid) heroine of Morton's comedy of "Town and Country."

On the 6th of October the Boston Theatre reopened with "The School for Scandal," in which appeared Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Brown, Mr. and Mrs. S. Wheatley, Mr. and Mrs. Drummond, Mrs. Barnes, and Messrs. Bernard, W. Green, Hughes, Bray, Pelby, and Dykes.

Frederick Brown's position at this time was so good that he very unwillingly played second even to Cooper or Wallack. His wife, a sister of Mrs. Charles Kemble, was an excellent actress of *soubrettes*, and was popular in a wide range of comic characters. The beautiful Mrs. Drummond, later Mrs. George Barrett, became a great favorite throughout the entire Union, and Mr. Pelby, whose name now stood opposite to old *Rowley*, was in after years to play *Hamlet*, *Bertram*, and *Pescara* with general acceptance. Mr. Hughes afterward became the husband of the lady so well remembered, as the companion of Burton, in *Mrs. Toodles* and *Lady Sowerby Creamly*. Mrs. S. Wheatley, once known as Mrs. Williams, was the *Lady Teazle* of the evening and the "leading high comedy" actress of the company, but was not Mrs. Sarah Wheatley, wife of Frederick Wheatley, who was so long the peerless "old lady" of New York, with whom she has often been confounded.

Mr. Duff opened on the 9th in "Macbeth," and on the 10th Mrs. Duff made her first appearance as *Rosalie Somers*. Her improvement was at once noticed, and she was now pronounced as interesting as an actress as she always had been as a woman. Her powerful and harmonious voice was highly praised, and its modulated tones of tenderness and pathos were said to be very effective.

1818–1823.

In February, 1818, Mrs. Duff presented a perfect picture of Shakespeare's *Juliet*, her *Romeo* being the then elegant and universally admired Cooper. Her improvement here was great and wonderful. She had all the loveliness and innocence of youth, the fervor and force of passion, the ecstacy of joy, and the agony of grief, terror, and despair, combined in her most harmonious and powerfully developed personation. In March she played *Jane Shore*, the cruelly tried *Julia* in Sheridan's "Rivals" (a character once performed by Mrs. Siddons, but now disliked of all actresses, and entirely eliminated from Mr. Jefferson's late elegant revival of the comedy), *Statira*, *Orasmyn* the boy in the romance of "The Ethiop;" and for her benefit, *Cora* in "Pizarro" and *Irene* in "Blue Beard." In Philadelphia she had played the *Princess* in the Eastern tale of "Aladdin." She here portrayed for a succession of nights the roguish young scamp himself.

In August, at Providence, she first attempted the shrewish *Juliana* in Tobin's "Honeymoon," a part which reverted to Mrs. Powell on the opening of the Boston Theatre in September. In October she made a hit as *Myrtillo* the dumb boy in "The Broken Sword," and on the 30th of November, on the elder James W. Wallack's first appearance in Boston in his favorite part of *Rolla*, her *Cora* materially added to the brilliancy of his success. She also enacted *Desdemona* to his *Othello*, and *Ophelia* to his *Hamlet*. *Morgiana* was frequently repeated. In the new melo-

drama of "Maid and Magpie" she made a powerful impression as *Annette*, and in the novelty "The Falls of Clyde" she personated *Ellen Enfield* seven times, — an unusual run for the period. A more extraordinary effort of hers, if the music of the part was given, is recorded on the 17th of February, 1819, when she played *Louisa* in Sheridan's opera of "The Duenna." Little has been said of Mrs. Duff's musical accomplishments in public, but she has been represented as a very sweet and charming songstress in private life; and she had previously in Baltimore appeared as *Mrs. Cornflower*, the heroine of Dibdin's opera "The Farmer's Wife."

On the 31st of March, the *Columbian Centinel* called attention to her benefit in the following article: "We hear with pleasure that the present appearance of the box-book presages a full auditory this evening, when Mrs. Duff will attempt a benefit. To the ladies of Boston we trust it is not necessary to point out the merits of this amiable actress, and if the gentlemen neglect to patronize their own sex it is hoped they will not extend their neglect to the ladies. We hope therefore that some of that exuberance of patronage which has been bestowed on comets will not be withheld from THIS BRILLIANT THOUGH FIXED STAR." On this occasion Mrs. Duff represented *Annette*, and also *Elizene* in the first performance of "The Forest of Hermanstadt."

This season — which was remarkable for the introduction to the Boston stage of Mr. and Mrs. Bartley and Mr. Wallack, for an unusually long engagement

of Mr. Cooper, for the highly successful performance of Mr. Duff in the operatic part of *Count Belino* with all its music, and for the Farewell to the profession of the veteran Bernard — closed on the 7th of June with Mrs. Duff's performance of *Bertha* in "The Point of Honor" and *Amazaide* in the romance of "Zembucca."

Mr. Duff is found in July enacting *Gossamer*, *Belcour*, *Tekeli*, etc. in Providence, his wife playing all the leading female characters. During that month Mr. Thomas Betterton — the celebrated actor of London and Dublin, and father of the more celebrated Mrs. Glover — made his first appearance there as *Vapid* in "The Dramatist," subsequently playing *Major O'Flaherty* in "The West Indian," with Mrs. Duff as *Marianne* and *Charlotte Rusport*. During this month she was seen in the pathetic character of *Mary* in "The Innkeeper's Daughter," and in all the trusting simplicity of *Cecily Homespun*, with peculiar effect.

On the occasion of Mr. Duff's benefit, September 8, he again repeated *Count Belino*, with all the music, and for the first time Mrs. Duff gave the songs of *Countess Rosalvina*. Of Mr. Duff's merits in *Count Belino* much discussion has taken place in latter years; but as he performed the part in Boston, Providence, Philadelphia, and Baltimore with applause to crowded houses, and selected it on several occasions for his benefits, there can be no doubt of the public verdict at the time. He had been led to undertake the character by the great success of Thomas Philipps in it, and one of his personal friends said that his voice was

music itself, and his ear so correct that every point of Philipps's beauties was truly given.

To Mr. Durang of Philadelphia Mr. Duff himself made the following remarks: "Charley, I am puzzled to know whether acting and singing are humbugs or not. There is poor Wheatley * whom the audience here will not listen to, yet in Dublin he led the business and supported Mrs. Siddons in all her pieces; and here am I, without knowing a note of music, singing and playing the part of *Count Belino* after Philipps, who is one of the first musicians of England, — and I've made by it in Philadelphia in three performances as much as Philipps during his whole engagement. I confess it was impudence in me; but the public liked it, so no matter!"

The Boston season commenced October 11, but Mrs. Duff's appearance was delayed until the 31st of December, when she came forward in the character of *Adela* in M. M. Noah's drama of "She Would be a Soldier, or The Battle of Chippewa;" her husband representing the *Indian Chief*, originally personated in New York by Maywood, and afterward by Edwin Forrest, — whose very successful and realistic embodiment of the Aboriginal character in that play first suggested the creation of his still more successful *rôle* of *Metamora*.

After two or three representations of the drama

* This refers to Mr. I. Wheatley, long a serious actor on the Philadelphia stage, not to Mr. S. Wheatley, to Mr. Frederick Wheatley, nor to the latter's more popular son Mr. William Wheatley.

Mrs. Duff was again absent from the stage until the 8th of May, 1820, when "The Bride of Abydos" was brought out with great splendor, — the heroine *Zulieka* being in her hands the principal feature of the piece, and one of her most admired and popular personations. She continued to perform it for many years in the principal theatres of the country.

At this period it rarely happened that a new play was produced more than six or eight times during any one season, and stars usually varied every night's performance throughout an engagement. The run of any play as at the present time was unknown and entirely unanticipated. During this month she again supported Mr. Wallack as *Juliet*, *Cora*, *Zorayda*, etc., and brought the season to a close on the 9th of June with her performance of *Lady Amaranth* in "Wild Oats" to her husband's *Rover*, and *Myrtillo* to his *Estevan*, for their joint benefit.

In the succeeding Providence campaign she personated no new characters; but her *Morgiana*, as of old, met with a warm greeting.

The Boston Theatre reopened on the 2d of October with Mr. and Mrs. Duff as *Major O'Flaherty* and *Charlotte Rusport*, and on the 9th they appeared as *Lord Hastings* and *Jane Shore*, — the lady's personation of the latter character raising her in a marked degree in the estimation of the public, which was still further increased on the 13th of the same month by her impassioned representation of *Hermione* in "The Distrest Mother," taken from Racine's "Andromaque." This was the character in which the Bostonians first

fully appreciated her genius and talents, and in which, throwing aside all tameness and restraint, she perhaps first fully developed the fire and passion that had long been slumbering in her soul.

Her next success was in a character of a different cast, that of *Lady Margaret* in "The Vampire, or Bride of the Isles," followed by her still more beautiful and touching personation of the exquisitely drawn character of *Jeanie Deans* in "The Heart of Mid Lothian." In November she added a part of a totally different description to her list, that of the *Countess of Lovelaugh* in the comedy of "Rochester," which proved to be one of her very few positive triumphs in the comic line. Later in the month she again lent her aid to Mr. Cooper in a round of tragedies and, in *Ophelia* especially, received renewed evidence of popular appreciation.

In January, 1821, Mr. and Mrs. John Barnes of the New York Theatre fulfilled a star engagement, during which on one occasion the names of these sometimes called rival actresses were contained in the same cast. This was on the 21st of that month, in Sheridan's comedy of "The Rivals," and as the distribution was a very remarkable one it is here presented entire: —

Sir A. Absolute	Mr. J. Barnes.
Captain Absolute	Mr. F. Brown.
Sir L. O'Trigger	Mr. Duff.
Bob Acres	Mr. Bray.
Falkland	Mr. Pelby.
David	Mr. Roberts.
Mrs. Malaprop	Mrs. Barnes.
Lydia Languish	Mrs. J. Barnes.
Julia	Mrs. Duff.
Lucy	Mrs. Pelby.

There is no record of any other appearance of Mrs. Duff and Mrs. Barnes in the same bill. Old Jack Barnes and his wife were unbounded favorites of the New York public. Mrs. J. Barnes, possessing great versatility and having real merit, ranked for many years in tragedy second only to Mrs. Duff. The Mrs. Barnes (previously Miss Bates) cast for *Mrs. Malaprop* was the best "old woman" then known on the Boston boards.

In February Mrs. Duff's name is found for the first time as *Lady Randolph* in "Douglas," a part in which her representation of a mother's love and tenderness has never been equalled on our stage; so say those who saw it. The engagement of Edmund Kean during this month created a furor of excitement, and he himself became the lion of the day. After playing nine nights — sharing receipts with the management after a thousand dollars per week, which resulted in giving him thirty-three hundred dollars — he was re-engaged for six nights at fifty pounds sterling per night and a clear benefit, from which engagement he realized twenty-one hundred and fifty dollars. On the 19th Mrs. Duff played *Ophelia* to his *Hamlet*, drawing forth, in a criticism on his acting, the remark that "in *Ophelia* Mrs. Duff was uncommonly impressive." She twice played *Cordelia* to his *Lear;* and, on his benefit night, *Hermione* to his *Orestes*. She had before played the character with applause but, stimulated by the unwonted excellence of her support, her genius now essayed its highest flight and won the crown it had so long deserved. It was while rehearsing this part that Mr. Kean is said to

have requested her to play with less force and intensity, or her acting would throw him into the background; to which she replied that, though she honored his rank and position in the profession, her duty to herself and the public would constrain her always to play to the best of her ability. Her hour of supreme triumph had at length arrived, for at night her performance fairly divided with Mr. Kean's the applause of the house, which unanimously pronounced her the equal of the greatest actor of the age; and in theatrical circles her brilliant success was the leading subject of conversation. Kean himself was so astonished at her personations that he said she was the superior of any actress on the British stage, — an opinion that he frequently reiterated.

She soon after appeared as the *Countess Adela* in "The Warlock of the Glen" and *Helen Mar* in "The Hero of Scotland," characters in which she won great local popularity and which she chose for her benefit on the 26th of March. In an article in the *Centinel* calling attention to this event, it is remarked that "the professional talents of Mrs. Duff have not been sufficiently known or estimated in this town. Her personations during the engagements of Messrs. Cooper and Kean the present season have elicited the warmest and most general applause, and they were among the first opportunities the public availed themselves of to know and appreciate her excellence and to award to her the meed she has so long deserved. Her *Ophelia*, *Cordelia*, *Tarquinia*, and *Hermione* will long be remembered as among the highest displays of histrionic talent."

The *Boston Gazette* published the following: —

"MRS. DUFF. It so seldom happens that a theme presents itself upon which we can bestow our unqualified approbation that we can by no means forego the gratification of saying a few words respecting this favorite actress. A favorite she has always been, but not without some touch of alloy. Hitherto she has lacked animation; but this season, especially during the engagement of Mr. Kean, she has burst from our dramatic constellation like a celestial stranger. She has evinced new powers and has proved that she is possessed of talents which must raise her to the foremost rank of her profession. Never within our recollection has an actress, who deservedly ranked so high before, raised herself so much in the estimation of the public within a month as Mrs. Duff."

And on the day of her benefit this additional article appeared: "We confess ourselves unable to do justice to this lady's merit, especially as it has been developed in her last few performances. We have been accustomed to pay deference to female as well as to male talent which has been sanctioned by the approbation of a London audience, and actresses have visited this metropolis from our sister cities and we have been proud to admire their various beauties, but never have we witnessed such a display of histrionic talent as in the representation of *Hermione* by Mrs. Duff. There was a spirit of inspiration breathing throughout the performance, passion developed and sustained the most vivid and imposing in nature, a pathos and sublimity of action, voice, and expression which genius seemed

to have impressed with her own image and hallowed with the breathings of her own divinity. There was the melting and the freezing glance, the quivering lip, the front of defiance, the trembling frame, — all that could express tender or exulting love, pride or scorn, stifled rage and bursting fury, revenge, indecision, and remorseful grief. The eye of fancy almost beheld the sacred shade of Racine descending from above to proclaim her for his own resuscitated *Hermione.* But it is not in this part alone that Mrs. Duff has excelled. In all the characters in which she has occasionally appeared, the same elements of a great actress have been at work. Those who have seen her in *Ophelia* will remember it throughout life. Certain it is she has the power, and we have felt it, to consecrate sorrow, dignify emotion, and kindle the imagination, as well as awaken the sympathies, which are among the highest attainments of this ennobling art."

The Boston public honored her benefit with an overflowing house.

For Mr. Duff's benefit on the 27th of April Mrs. Duff reappeared as the heroine of "Tancred and Sigismonda," when the late Edward J. Thayer successfully made his first appearance on a public stage as *Tancred,* although in after life his chief triumphs were in light comedy. Mrs. Duff also recited Collins's "Ode on the Passions." The papers spoke of her *Sigismonda* as being well calculated to display to advantage her extraordinary talents. Mrs. Duff seems to have first assumed the part of the *Unknown Female,* (*Eugenia*) in Dimond's melodrama "The Foundling of the Forest" on

the 11th of May. General audiences then as now liked the sensational drama, so called, better than the classic or legitimate; and this performance was loudly applauded, the character becoming with her one of long standing popularity.

May 23 Mr. Kean commenced a new engagement, playing *Lear* with Mrs. Duff as *Cordelia;* and, on the 24th, *Jaffier* in "Venice Preserved" to Mr. Duff's *Pierre* and Mrs. Duff's *Belvidera* — her first assumption of the character. On the 25th Mr. Kean was advertised to appear as *Richard III.*, but mortally offended the citizens of Boston by refusing to play to a thin house; an insult which resulted in 1825 in serious rioting, on his attempted reappearance, both there and in New York. On this occasion Mr. Frederick Brown was substituted as *Richard*, and Mrs. Duff for the first time undertook *Queen Elizabeth*, in consequence of the recent bereavement and widowhood of Mrs. Powell to whom the part belonged. With a repetition of *Jane Shore* on the 28th Mrs. Duff closed her labors for the season, having won a position in advance of every actress hitherto known in Boston, and with a fame that resounded throughout the entire country.

Mr. Duff's connection with the Boston Theatre as manager terminated with the season, but he and his wife were both engaged as performers by his successors Messrs. Kilner and Clark. In consequence of protracted illness Mrs. Duff's appearance did not take place until Jan. 14, 1822, when she came out as *Jane Shore*, and a fortnight later repeated *Sigismonda*, — a character which, with all her ability, she never succeeded in

making popular. On the 13th of March she first played *Therese* in Howard Payne's "Orphan of Geneva," which later was one of her most admired personations. On the 1st of April she enacted Shakespeare's *Rosalind*, probably for the first and only time; on the 10th the *Widow Belmore* in Murphy's comedy "The Way to Keep Him;" and on the 15th *Lady Jane* in the same author's "Know Your Own Mind;" but comedy was not her forte and she rarely caused any furor therein, her highest praise being that she was calmly correct and not unpleasing. Mr. Thayer brought out for his benefit an old drama entitled "Edgar, or Caledonian Feuds," in which Mrs. Duff was cast for *Matilda*, but it does not appear to have been repeated. For her own benefit she selected *Hermione* and *Therese*, characters in which she was very popular.

On the 6th of May Mr. Booth, Sr. — the only acknowledged representative of the part in America save Cooke and Kean — made his first appearance in Boston as *Richard III.* On the 9th he played *King Lear* with Mrs. Duff as *Cordelia;* and on the 20th for his benefit, to a house of eight hundred dollars, enacted *Hamlet* with Mrs. Duff as *Ophelia*, in which character she so surprised and delighted him that he also placed her above all competition in Europe or America; and some time after, in a letter to George Holland the comedian (then in England), he described her as the greatest actress in the world, and added that his strenuous advice alone prevented her visiting London.

During the ensuing summer Mr. Duff managed an establishment in Boston called the New City Theatre,

Washington Gardens; and he and Mrs. Duff, with Mrs. Holman the vocalist, Miss Ellen Johnson (afterwards Mrs Hilson), Mr. Moreland and Mr. Jacob Woodhull from the Park Theatre, New York, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Durang, from Philadelphia, were its principal attractions.

Mrs. Duff here repeated *Juliana* in the "Honeymoon," and on the 5th of August first personated the penitent and suffering *Mrs. Haller* in the tearful but much abused play of "The Stranger." Her representation was an entire success, and from all accessible records it would appear to have been repeated (with one exception) more frequently than any other of her characters. On the 7th for the first time she played *Katherine* in "The Taming of the Shrew," which proved to be her most popular assumption in comedy, from the fact probably that little gayety or joyousness is required in its embodiment. She could exhibit scorn, anger, and contempt with power, and deliver a sarcasm with the most cutting poignancy, as well as assume the opposite characteristics of lowly humility which the part requires; and she was frequently called on for its repetition.

On the 20th of August, Howard Payne's, "Adeline" was first given in Boston, Mrs. Duff personating the unfortunate heroine. The character however was never a favorite with her, and when engaged in New York she refused to perform it. The season extended to the middle of September; but no record of Mrs. Duff's subsequent performance is found until April 7, 1823, when she made her first appearance in Philadelphia

in six years at the Chestnut Street Theatre, for the benefit of Mr. Booth, in her renowned character of *Hermione*, with Mr. Booth as *Orestes*, Mr. Wood as *Pyrrhus*, and Mrs. Wood as *Andromache*, — the receipts being four hundred and ninety-two dollars. Mr. Booth's previous six nights had run from one hundred and sixty-seven to three hundred dollars, averaging about two hundred and fifty-five dollars per night. Of this occasion Mr. Wood remarks: "We had now the first appearance of Mrs. Duff since her late very decided success in Boston. She seemed to have made in that city a discovery of powers up to that time latent, and now destined to astonish and delight future audiences. Her success as *Hermione* fully confirmed the judgment of her Boston friends." On the 21st of the same month she personated *Statira* for the benefit of Alexander Wilson who appeared as *Alexander the Great*.

Mr. Duff, having completed an arrangement with Messrs. Wood and Warren, proceeded to Baltimore, where he and Mrs. Duff commenced their engagement as *Romeo* and *Juliet* on the 7th of May, followed by the lady's performance of *Belvidera*, *Eugenia*, *Hermione*, *Therese*, *Calanthe*, *Isabella*, *Annette*, *Cora*, *Meg Merrilies*, and *Florinda*. Although late in the season, and in a small city, their nightly receipts averaged two hundred and ten dollars, with a benefit to Mrs. Duff of six hundred and thirty-four; and this where Mr. Booth had lately been playing to an average of one hundred and eighty-five dollars for eight nights, and a benefit of two hundred and sixty-nine. During this engagement

Mrs. Duff first added *Isabella*, *Meg Merrilies*, and *Florinda* to her list of characters. In *Isabella* she most pathetically portrayed the sorrows and madness of deceived and suffering innocence, and displayed powers which perhaps more than in any other character entitled her to be called the first actress of the day. It became acknowledged as her finest and most admired performance in legitimate tragedy, and has not been equalled in merit by any subsequent performer. *Florinda* also proved to be one of her strong parts, and made so powerful an impression on the public mind that it was rare thereafter to find an actress willing to attempt it. It was the last character she ever played, and her name alone is now remembered in connection with it. Of her *Meg Merrilies*, though occasionally called on to repeat it, no special description has been found; and she never appears to have chosen it for a benefit, or admitted it into her round of characters during any subsequent star engagement. At the close of the Baltimore season she visited Washington and repeated most of the characters mentioned, adding to them, for the first time, *Elvira* to her husband's *Rolla* and handsome Henry Wallack's *Pizarro*.* To Mr. Booth's *Reuben Glenroy*, *Othello*, and *Lear*, she enacted *Rosalie Somers*, *Desdemona*, and *Cordelia*, — the receipts to which severally were one hundred, one hundred and two, and one hundred and eight dollars! Mr. and Mrs. Duff's benefit (without

* *Cora's Child* at this period was represented by James W. Wallack, Jr., son of Henry Wallack, — in later life an accomplished and highly popular melodramatic actor.

Mr. Booth) reached a hundred and sixty-five, though they afterwards played to less than one hundred dollars. It seems strange that managers should have attempted a season in Washington during the heat of midsummer.

Concerning Mrs. Duff's appearance at the Park Theatre, New York, a theatrical article in the *New York Albion* of August 30, 1823, concludes with the following remarks: "We are most happy to add that Mrs. Duff, the darling of the Boston boards, has made a short engagement with our manager, and will in September present herself to a New York audience;" and the *Evening Post* of September 5 heralds her advent in the following terms: "We perceive by the bills that Mrs. Duff, of whom fame speaks highly, is to make her first appearance this evening before a New York audience in the character of *Hermione* in "The Distrest Mother." The part of *Orestes* has been assigned to Mr. Booth, and we have no doubt the united efforts of these two celebrated performers will prove a real treat to the lovers of the drama." Of the remaining characters in the play, *Pyrrhus* was entrusted to Mr. J. H. Clarke, *Pylades* to Mr. Woodhull, and *Andromache* to the amiable and admired favorite Ellen Johnson, afterwards Mrs. Hilson.

The *Albion* thus discoursed on the event: "Mrs. Duff made her début on our boards last night as *Hermione* in "The Distrest Mother." It was in this character she reaped such a rich harvest of laurels before the Boston audience, and in which she made a powerful impression on the house last night. Mrs. Duff

possesses a fine person, a sweet voice, and great command of countenance, and we are confident will soon become a general favorite."

Her second appearance at the Park Theatre was as *Calanthe* to the *Damon* of Mr. Cooper and *Pythias* of Mr. E. Simpson, and the impression she made on one auditor may be gathered from the following communication addressed to the *New York American* of the next day: "I never before wrote a word in praise of a play-actor or actress, but I cannot help saying of Mrs. Duff that her representation of *Calanthe* last evening was the most spirited and natural performance I ever witnessed. I say *natural*, where words distil from the lips without affectation or mouthing and where 'the action suits the words.' I have seen women whose performances I have tried to like, but Mrs. Duff makes her way to the heart as if nature rather than art stimulated her feelings and filled her soul."

The *New York Mirror*, then the fashionable literary and family paper, in noticing this performance said that "the beautiful *Calanthe* lived and breathed in the person of Mrs. Duff. This lady is a new and very valuable addition to our stage. She has a good figure, a very graceful action, a soft clear voice,—and so handsome a face withal that she must always be received with pleasure by a New York audience. She is certainly an actress of the highest class." *Calanthe* was one of her most popular parts, and stands next to *Mrs. Haller* in the number of its representations. Her next characters in succession were *Lady Macbeth*, *Tullia*, *Roxana*, *Imogine*, and *Mrs. Beverley* — all for the first

time — to the *Macbeth*, *Brutus*, *Bertram*, and *Beverley* of Mr. Cooper.

In *Lady Macbeth* Mrs. Duff for many years stood peerless and alone; in *Tullia* she was more than equal to the requirements of the part; in *Imogine* she was powerful and exciting beyond all precedent; and in *Mrs. Beverley* all womanly tenderness, love, confidence, sorrow, and despair were expressed with so much sympathy and pathos that it took its place among the very highest creations of histrionic art. Her *Roxana* was pronounced a fine piece of acting and received loud applause, yet the character was not as pleasing to the actress as its rival *Statira* in the same tragedy. Mrs. Duff's benefit took place on the 24th of September when she played *Florinda* in "The Apostate," with Mr. Duff (his first appearance in New York for nearly ten years) as *Malec*, Maywood as *Pescara*, and E. Simpson as *Hemeya*. Mr. Duff also appeared as the *Three Singles*.

In speaking of this event the *Albion* said: "The benefit we fear was not very productive, but Mr. and Mrs. Duff had the satisfaction to receive unbounded applause from all parts of the house throughout the evening. With much regret we announce that Mrs. Duff will not be engaged for the season."

The shortness of this engagement was undoubtedly the greatest mistake or misfortune of Mrs. Duff's professional life. She made a powerful impression on her audiences and every writer spoke in her praise, but the difficulty was to get the fashionable world to see her. Had she been engaged as the "leading lady" of the

theatre for a few months, if not for the entire season, she would necessarily have made herself generally known, and for her to be known was to be admired; but the New York *dilettanti* seemed to consider it a piece of presumption for a stock actress from the Boston and Philadelphia theatres to present herself as a star on the Metropolitan stage, and many of them in consequence avoided the theatre during her stay. One prosperous season at the Park would have carried her in triumph throughout the land, and returned her to its boards with its audience anxious to give a warm welcome on her reappearance.

It was a mistake also on the part of Messrs. Price and Simpson that they did not secure her services; for a year or two later, when better known, her attractiveness at the then new Bowery Theatre drew off a large portion of the usual patronage of the Park. Mrs. Barnes, their leading actress in tragedy, though possessing merit, fell far short of Mrs. Duff's preeminence.

Resuming their engagement with Messrs. Warren and Wood, Mr. and Mrs. Duff next proceeded to Baltimore where, on the 6th of October, 1823, we find Mrs. Duff opening as *Hermione* to the *Orestes* of Frederick Brown. She also played *Calanthe* to his *Damon*, *Lady Constance* to his *King John*, and *Cordelia* to his *Lear*,—taking her benefit on the 20th of the month as *Eugenia* in "The Foundling of the Forest." On the 24th of December Mrs. Duff commenced her engagement in Philadelphia with her ever favorite *Hermione*, Mr. Booth being engaged for *Orestes*.

1824.

On the 1st of January, 1824, she was announced for *Zulieka* in "The Bride of Abydos" to the *Selim* of Mr. Cooper, and repeated it several times during the season, with Mr. Booth, Mr. H. Wallack and others in Mr. Cooper's part.

On the 7th of January Mr. Booth played *Hamlet*, Mrs. Duff delivered an original poetical address, and Mr. Duff played *Walter* in "The Children in the Wood," for the benefit of the Greeks then struggling for their liberty. The receipts were nine hundred and twenty-two dollars, and this was the first time that Mr. Booth received a real hearty greeting at the hands of the Philadelphians, or played among them to an audience at all worthy of his deserts. Later when he played *Brutus* for his benefit, with Mrs. Duff as *Tullia* he was honored with a house of ten hundred and thirty-eight dollars. During the season Mrs. Duff played her usual round of characters with marked success, including *Meg Merrilies* to the *Henry Bertram* of Mr. Pearman, the then favorite English vocalist, and *Virginia*, probably for the first time, to Cooper's *Virginius*.

On the 12th of March J. N. Barker's successful tragic play of "Superstition" was produced, with Mrs. Wood as *Isabella* and Mrs. Duff as *Mary*. Mr. Wood says it was received with deserved applause; and Mr. Wemyss adds that it was rarely repeated, in consequence of Mrs. Duff's so far outplaying the manager's wife that he did not like her to appear in such disadvantageous contrast. Mrs. Duff's portrait in the character of *Mary* was painted by Neagle, and engraved

by Longacre for Lopez & Wemyss's fine edition of acting plays. The engraving gives but a faint idea of the beauty of the lady, as it represents her in the Mad scene of the play.

Dimond's "Ethiop" being soon after revived, Mrs. Duff made a pronounced success as *Cephania*. She also played *Amelia* in "The Robbers" and *Queen Elizabeth* in "Kenilworth." For her benefit she chose "Adrian and Orilla," playing *Madame Clermont* for the first time. Out of the line of legitimate tragedy this has been called Mrs. Duff's finest personation. It won the commendation of Kean, who conceded it to be the best sustained delineation of maternal affection he had ever witnessed; and in New York afterwards it was more frequently performed by her than any other character. It was originally given at Covent Garden by Mrs. George Bartley, who repeated it during her American engagements in 1819. In May Mrs. Duff, in conjunction with Mr. Booth, played a brilliant engagement at Baltimore, — on one occasion her scene as *Florinda* in the fourth act of "The Apostate" being honored with nine distinct rounds of applause.

In the summer of 1824 Mr. and Mrs. Duff were at the Chatham Garden Theatre, New York, under Barriere's management, opening there on the 12th of August in "Venice Preserved" and "Three and the Deuce," with Mrs. Duff as *Belvidera*, Henry Wallack as *Pierre*, and Mr. Duff as *Jaffier* and the *Three Singles*. From a long article on their performance in the *Emerald*, a weekly paper of the time, a few passages are selected: "If we spoke of Mrs. Duff as we feel, we should risk the imputation of flattery or enthu-

siasm. With a beauty the most intellectual, she combines gesture and elocution of the highest order. We saw her in grief and in joy, in sorrow and in gladness; and were charmed with the heavenly expression of a countenance at one time beaming through the clouds, and at another time giving increased splendor to the light which occasionally enlivened the hopes of *Belvidera*. . . . We shall never as long as our attachment for the drama exists, forget the power with which Mrs. Duff acquitted herself."

Mrs. Duff appeared here as *Mrs. Haller*, *Jane Shore*, *Mrs. Beverley*, *Madame Clermont*, *and Juliet*,— her principal support coming from her husband in the leading male characters.

The company of the establishment at this time was excellent, including on its roll the names of Henry Wallack, Thomas Kilner, George Barrett, Walter Hughes, John A. Stone, Harry Moreland, Alexander Simpson, Spiller, Charles Durang, Williamson, Somerville, John Jefferson, Mrs. Entwistle, Mrs. Henry (afterwards Mrs. G. Barrett), Mrs. Waring (afterwards Mrs. Blake), Mrs. H. Wallack, Mrs. Walstein, Mrs. C. Durang, Mrs. Kilner, Mrs. Allen, and others.

In complimenting Mrs. Duff's performances the *Albion* again expresses the wish that she might remain permanently in New York, as "she is a powerful acquisition to any theatre."

Mr. and Mrs. Duff next fulfilled an engagement at Boston, where they opened on the 17th of September in "The Gamester" and "Three and the Deuce." Mrs. Duff's characters here were *Mrs. Beverley*, *Mrs. Haller*,

Ellen Enfield, Eugenia, Hermione (twice), *Therese, Madame Clermont, Florinda, Roxana, Mrs. Greville* in "Secrets Worth Knowing," and *Countess Adela* in "The Warlock of the Glen." From the celebrated Henry J. Finn she had support in several prominent tragic and melodramatic characters. In Boston Mr. Finn played tragedy and comedy with almost equal success, but in New York he is remembered solely as among the best of actors in broad and eccentric comedy. It is noticeable that during this season Miss Jane Placide (afterwards the tragic favorite of New Orleans) played such vastly dissimilar characters as *Mrs. Mortimer* to Duff's *Gossamer* in "Laugh When You Can," and *Sally Downright* to his *Rostrum* in "Secrets Worth Knowing."

Towards the close of the engagement the *Boston Gazette* called attention to Mrs. Duff's approaching benefit as follows: —

"Mrs. Duff. This interesting and excellent actress has made her way to the high standing she now holds, without clamor, excitement, or party influence. She was always thought to possess first-rate powers, but these not properly schooled; and until the time Kean came here, her reputation had nothing extraordinary in it. She was beautiful and lovely before, but at that time she burst upon the public in the most astonishing manner in the character of *Hermione;* after which every character she acted underwent a change for the better, and since then her powers have been constantly developing. In the character of *Madame Clermont* last Friday evening she produced a wonderful effect upon the

house, her talents and improvement were universally acknowledged, and all seemed to be grieved that her great powers had not been discovered years ago.

"We trust her benefit may be fully attended, for, added to her professional merit, she has a charm which never fails to please with our fair countrywomen, — the charm of a virtuous life. She is known to be the kind, careful, and pious mother of a numerous family, and it is said by those who are best acquainted with her, that if the public awaken her professional ambition, the endearments of her family have all her heart."

It has been surmised that anxiety for her family was the chief cause of Mrs. Duff's awakened energy and desire to excel in her profession, which in earlier life she had felt unnecessary and had been indifferent to. In the beginning of their career in America Mr. and Mrs. Duff were both very attractive, she from her personal loveliness, and her husband from his excellent acting. Their salaries were fair and their benefits most liberal, but Mr. Duff's management at Boston had been profitless. Kean, the Wallacks, Booth, Maywood, and other lights had dimmed the brilliancy of his achievements as an actor. He did not advance in excellence, and from repeated attacks of gout he was frequently on the sick list for weeks in succession. Mrs. Duff felt that on her alone would soon depend the entire support of her family, a fear that in after years was unfortunately realized. Stimulated perhaps by Kean's magnetic influence, she studied closely; and, throwing her whole soul into the characters she undertook and into which for the time she seemed transfused, she made those

brilliant efforts which resulted in complete success and forced the acknowledgment of her superiority to all who had preceded her.

From October 20 to December 1, 1824, Mr. and Mrs. Duff were in Baltimore, and their services were in requisition on every play night, — the lady appearing eight times as *Zulieka* to houses averaging three hundred and fifty dollars, four times as the *Countess Adela* in "The Warlock of the Glen," and in various other characters, — taking for her benefit *Isabella* and *Katherine the Shrew*, which drew a house of four hundred and eight dollars, the net amount to Mrs. Duff being two hundred and forty-seven. Previous to the appearance of the Duffs this season Conway the tall tragedian had played a star engagement to houses averaging only two hundred and forty dollars; but for his benefit he procured the assistance of Mr. Booth and Mr. and Mrs. Duff in "The Apostate," and the receipts for this splendid combination reached the extraordinary sum of seven hundred and thirty-eight dollars. Booth played *Pescara;* Conway, *Hemeya;* Duff, *Malec;* and Mrs. Duff, of course, *Florinda*.

There is something singular in the history of Booth's connection with the part of *Pescara*. It is said to have been written by Sheil expressly for him; but on the production of the play at Covent Garden, in 1817, after rehearsing it four times he refused to perform it because, as it is said, he thought the characters of *Hemeya* and *Malec* (assigned to Charles Kemble and Young) were superior; or, as one of his biographers suggests, because he wished to play *Hemeya* to the

Florinda of the beautiful Miss O'Neill. Whatever the cause of his renunciation, it gave Macready an opportunity to make a powerful impression on the London audience in an original part; and in after years, when Booth concluded to add it to his list of characters, he made it on the American stage exclusively his own. Geneste, the learned theatrical historian, however, considers *Malec* the best male character in the play.

1825.

The Philadelphia season commenced late in 1824 and extended to the end of April, 1825. For more than seven weeks during its progress Mrs. Duff was detained from her duties by injuries received while performing *Zulieka* to Cooper's *Selim* in "The Bride of Abydos" on the evening of January 4. In the last act of the piece the walls of the Seraglio, in which *Zulieka* is confined, are supposed to be beaten down by an outside assault; and, by some mismanagement of the blocks of which they were composed, Mrs. Duff was precipitated from a gallery a distance of ten feet to the stage, producing severe contusions on her head and face, and causing such anxiety in the audience that they refused to leave the house till they were assured by Mr. Wood — and afterwards by Dr. Gibson, a surgeon in attendance — that no apprehension of fatal consequences need be entertained and that no bone had been broken. On her reappearance, March 2, she received an enthusiastic welcome from a house that seemed desirous of expressing its congratulations for her recovery as well as its delight on her return

to the stage. During the season she enacted *Queen Elizabeth*, *Cordelia*, and *Portia* to Booth's *Richard*, *Lear*, and *Cassius*; *Virginia* to Cooper's *Virginius*; *Elvira* and *Calanthe* to Pelby's *Rolla* and *Damon*; and *Juliet*, *Lady Randolph*, and *Agatha Friberg* to Watkins Burroughs's *Romeo*, *Young Norval*, and *Frederick*. For Mr. Jefferson's benefit she for the first time assumed the character of *Lady Melmoth* in the comedy of "Folly as it Flies," to a house of twelve hundred and fifty-six dollars. *Agatha Friberg* in "Lovers' Vows" was a new character to her; and *Olympia* was specially written for her by Booth in his drama of "Ugolino," first produced for Henry Wallack's benefit on the 20th of April. For her own benefit she chose *Florinda* and *Katherine*, — Henry Wallack playing *Pescara*; Pelby, *Hemeya*; and Duff, *Malec* and *Petruchio*. The receipts were seven hundred and forty-seven dollars.

Mrs. Duff commenced her spring engagement at Baltimore May 6, 1825, as *Isabella*. She repeated *Zulieka* several times, and played *Madame Clermont* for Mr. Warren's benefit, to one thousand and eighty dollars. The season ended in June, recommencing in October with Mrs. Duff as *Lady Randolph* to the *Douglas* of a young aspirant named Fielding. On the 24th of the month Knowles's tragic play of "William Tell" was first produced in Baltimore, and Mrs. Duff was cast for *Emma*, *Tell's* wife. She made it, as far as the author would permit, effective, but it was not a particularly strong part. Wood personated *Tell*; Duff, *Michael*; Jefferson, *Braun*; and Mrs. Wood, *Albert*.

Philadelphia Theatre.

For the remainder of the Season, the Curtain will rise at Seven o'clock, precisely.

Last Week but One.

Mrs. DUFF's

BENEFIT,

On this occasion,

MR. PELBY,

Has volunteered his services.

Friday Evening, April 22, 1825,

Will be presented a celebrated Tragedy called

THE APOSTATE.

Written by Richard Sheil, Esq. and performed in London, Dublin and New York with great success.

Henegra, the descendant of Moorish Kings,	Mr. PELBY.
Malec, an old Moor,	Mr. DUFF
Pescara, Governor of Grenada,	Mr. WALLACK.
Hamet, Two Moors,	Mr. BIGNALL.
Haly, Friends of Henegra,	Mr. J. JEFFERSON.
Alvarez, a Nobleman of Grenada,	Mr. WHEATLY
Gomez, an Inquisitor,	Mr. HATHWELL
Calk,	Mr PORTER.
Spanish Officer,	Mr MURRAY.
Moors,	Messrs. Mestayer, Collins, &c.
Spaniards,	Mr. PARKER, &c.
Monks, Officers of the Inquisition, &c	
Florinda, Daughter of Alvarez,	Mrs DUFF

After which, the favourite Farce, in 3 Acts, of

CATHERINE

AND

PETRUCHIO;

Or, The Taming of the Shrew.

Petruchio,	Mr. DUFF.	Pedro,	Mr. MURRAY.
Baptista,	Mr HATHWELL.	Tailor,	Mr. BURKE.
Hortensio,	Mr PORTER.	Nathaniel,	Mr PARKER.
Gromio,	Mr. JEFFERSON.	Catherine,	Mrs. DUFF
Music Master,	Mr. FRANCIS.	Bianca,	Miss HATHWELL.
Biondello,	Mr. J. JEFFERSON.	Curtis,	Mrs. SIMPSON.

On Saturday, a new comic piece, (for the first time) called *Simpson & Co.*—the Farce of the *Village Lawyer*—and, (20th time) the splendid Drama of *Cherry and Fair Star*, for the Benefit of Mr. BURKE.

Mr DUFF's Benefit on Monday.

Mrs. WALLACK's Benefit on Tuesday.

Mr. J. JEFFERSON & Mrs. ANDERSON's Benefit on Wednesday.

The Splendid Historical Drama of the EXILE, *or, the Russian Daughter* will be revived with magnificent new Scenes, Dresses and Decorations.

Places in the Boxes may be had of Mr. Johnston, at the Box Office, from 10 until 2 o'clock

Proper Officers are appointed, who will rigidly enforce decorum.—A few seats, nightly, in the Orchestra for sale at Box prices, at Mr. Johnston's Office. Checks are not transferable.

No postponement on account of weather.

BOX, ONE DOLLAR—PIT, FIFTY CENTS—GALLERY, TWENTY-FIVE CENTS.

Tickets to be had of Thomas Desilver, No. 253, Market Street.

Prospectus of *Cherry and Fair Star*, for sale by Thomas Desilver, No. 253, Market Street, and at the Box Office.—Also, *Songs, Duetts, &c.* in the Drama of DER FREYSCHUTZ, for sale as above.

For her benefit she selected *Eugenia* in "The Foundling of the Forest," for which she received the net amount of two hundred and six dollars.

She opened again in Philadelphia on the 23d of November as *Lady Randolph*, and during the season repeated *Emma* six times and *Elvira* four times. She played as before with Cooper, Conway, and Burroughs, and for the first time with Mr. and Mrs. Hamblin. She was also the *Cordelia* and *Tullia* to Mr. Kean's *Lear* and *Brutus*. Mr. Kean's engagement of ten nights in Philadelphia at this period averaged more than eight hundred dollars per night. He opened as *Richard* to eleven hundred and sixty-five, and repeated it for his benefit to twelve hundred and fifty-four dollars, — on both of which occasions Mrs. Duff personated *Queen Elizabeth*. For her own benefit she played *Mrs. Beverley* and *Annette* to only four hundred and seventy-seven dollars, and for her husband's benefit, *Alexina* in "The Exile" to six hundred and sixteen dollars.

1826.

The season was remarkable for Kean's final performances in Philadelphia and for his continued commendation of Mrs. Duff's co-operation; as well as for the triumphant reappearance in his native city of Edwin Forrest, who for the benefit of Mr. Charles Porter on the 16th of May, 1826, enacted *Jaffier* to Mrs. Duff's *Belvidera* to a house of four hundred and one dollars. His success was of so pronounced a character that he was allowed two nights more though at the very close of the season, on one of which Mrs. Duff personated

Elvira to his *Rolla* to four hundred and eighty-three dollars. On the 23d of April she had performed the same character to Mr. Duff's *Rolla* to five hundred and twenty-four dollars.

A critic of unusual pretensions and more than common ability gave, over the signature of "Jacques" in the *United States Gazette* during the season just closed, a series of articles on the performances at the theatre, which attracted general attention and were considered of sufficient value to be republished in book form. He was not sparing in the use of the lash, and Mr. Duff in many parts felt its application with unmerciful force and stinging severity. Still, merit was allowed him, and censure perhaps was more freely administered for his lack of effort than for his lack of ability. His *Rolla* was said to be in many particulars superior to that of any rival. His *Dashwould*, *Mr. Oakley*, and *Duke Aranza* were represented with so much ease, grace, and spirit that in them his faults were not worth noticing; and were all his characters as well acted, the theatre would have a treasure in him.

Mrs. Duff was admired for her beauty of face and form, and applauded for her tenderness and pathos, as well as for her skill in portraying pride, anger, scorn, remorse, anguish, and despair, but was censured for transitions said to be too abrupt, and for a lack of the happy medium between the two extremes. A few of the writer's remarks are here repeated: "As *Emma* in 'William Tell' Mrs. Duff looked and acted like a mother. This lady appears to improve nightly. With the finest figure and the most noble and expressive

countenance of any actress we have ever seen, she needs only time and attention to make her unrivalled in the highest walks of tragedy." Her *Angela* in "The Castle Spectre" was not approved until her meeting with the *Ghost*, when "her attitude, the horror expressed on her features, and her manner of shrinking from its touch was one of the most striking exhibitions ever witnessed." "Mrs. Duff's *Calanthe* was tender and touching." In "Brutus" "Mrs. Duff particularly merited attention as *Tullia*. Her situation at intervals is truly tragic. When the dialogue assumes the loftiness of rage, disdain, and madness she bursts forth with tremendous energy. Her attitudes and manner were extremely dignified and natural. In the scene in Rhea's Temple she carried tragic horror to its highest pitch. Her paleness, the wildness of her eyes, the lividness of her lips, the disorder of her hair, and the shrieking accents that seemed to burst from her very soul, — were tremendously forcible, terribly faithful. The dying scene that follows at the sight of her father's statue, with the wild cry that accompanied it, was awful in the extreme. We have witnessed similar scenes, but never, *never* any one equal to this night's! It was one of those singular and powerful exhibitions that leave an impression on the mind never to be effaced."

In Mrs. Duff's *Lady Randolph* the critic found so many beauties and so many imperfections that he could scarcely tell which predominated. But her questioning ejaculation, "Was he alive?" to *Old Norval* when he tells of the babe he discovered in the water, "was electric. It was the voice of nature, and its force

was felt by every hearer." It will be remembered that this was Mrs. Barry's great point in the play.

In "Romeo and Juliet" "Mrs. Duff exceeded our expectations. We never saw the *Juliet* of our imagination, and do not expect we ever shall. More than once in the Garden scene we were ready to exclaim: —

> 'How silver sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
> Like softest music to attending ears!'

The very soul of the fair Capulet seemed in her utterance of

> 'My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
> My love as deep; the more I give to thee
> The more I have, for both are infinite.'

It was as true to nature as is the passage (but if possible more so) where *Romeo* says he would he were her bird, and she replies: —

> 'Sweet, so would I, —
> Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.'

The *naïveté* she displayed in coaxing the old *Nurse* was admirable; we were not aware that she could assume so much playfulness. The heroic spirit of the luckless maiden was developed with fidelity in the scene with *Friar Laurence;* but when about to swallow the draught she astonished us by those emanations of genius she sometimes exhibits — as powerful as they are original — when she exclaimed

> 'Or if I wake shall I not be distraught,
> Environéd with all these hideous fears,
> And madly play with my forefathers' joints?
> And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud?

> And in this rage with some great kinsman's bone,
> As with a club, dash out my desperate brains?
> O look! methinks I see my cousin's ghost
> Seeking out Romeo; — stay, Tybalt, stay!'

Whoever has seen Mrs. Duff when roused to frenzy, rage, or despair, may conceive her manner in this part, but we cannot describe it properly; no description can reach reality. One would have supposed the ghost of *Tybalt* was really before her; her look, the wildness of her appearance, and her arms thrown out as if to interpose a barrier between *Romeo* and his purpose, while she drank the potent liquid, — all impressed the spectator with the idea she had drawn of his figure in the thin air."

Of "The Lady of the Lake" our critic says: "We never saw Mrs. Duff look so beautiful, so exquisitely sweet, as in *Ellen Douglas*. She appeared and acted as the poet's Lady of the Lake." In "The Gamester" "Mr. Duff as the infatuated *Beverley* was unusually commendable; we have rarely seen him display so much ability. Mrs. Duff as his patient, fond, and devoted wife was equally excellent. At times she displayed an exquisite variety of warmth and feeling and pathos that wholly subdued the audience. This lady has the admirable faculty of entwining herself with our warmest sympathies; she appeals to our hearts rather than our judgment." That is, though not always conforming to established rules of art, Mrs. Duff's performances touched the feelings with a power so irresistible, that nature always acknowledged their truth by the unrestrained offering of sobs and tears. Other writers

joined in the chorus of praise accorded to Mrs. Duff, and one who used the signature of "Marcus" congratulated himself on having discerned in her earliest and crudest performance of *Juliet* prophetic indications of that consummate genius which had now raised her beyond all tragic competition on the American stage. He discussed the merits of her various impersonations, and was particularly charmed with her full, mellow voice, her distinct, unhurried articulation, and the impressive and appropriate eloquence with which she delivered the words of her author in happy consonance with the various phases of suffering which she so ably simulated. In conclusion he called upon the Quaker City to adopt her as its own, as no actress in the country could fill the void her loss would create. She had reached an eminence that could do justice to the finest language of Shakespeare or Racine; and though this was a high encomium, the merit that had earned it would have the magnanimity to bear it. It would neither produce a change in conduct nor lead to future exorbitant demands from the managers of the theatre.

Notwithstanding these high commendations and earnest wishes of their admirers, Mr. and Mrs. Duff's contract with Messrs. Warren and Wood was not renewed, but they concluded an engagement with Henry Wallack of the Chatham Garden Theatre, New York, where they commenced on the 23d of May with "The Foundling of the Forest" and "Three and the Deuce," Mrs. Duff as *Eugenia* and Mr. Duff as the *Three Singles*. On the 5th of June "The Game-

ster" was performed, — *Beverley* by Mr. Conway, his first appearance in that theatre; *Stukely*, Mr. Scott (afterwards famous as *Long Tom Coffin*); *Lewson*, Mr. H. Wallack; *Mrs. Beverley*, Mrs. Duff; and *Charlotte*, Mrs. H. Wallack. Mr. Conway's *Beverley* was warmly praised, but the *Mirror* said: "Fine as was the acting of Conway we will venture to say that a greater than Conway was there, for Mrs. Duff was unquestionably the presiding spirit of the hour. The opinion lately expressed by a contemporary, that this lady is superior to any actress on the American or British stage, we think has every probability of being correct, and we are more and more inclined to believe in it every time we witness her performance." She next played *Belvidera*, *Juliet*, *Elvira*, and *Mrs. Haller* to Conway's *Jaffier*, *Romeo*, *Rolla*, and the *Stranger*.

On the 15th of June was produced, for the first time on any stage, George P. Morris's drama entitled "Brier Cliff, a Tale of the Revolution," taken from a popular novel then lately published under the name of "Whig and Tory." It was very enthusiastically received and several times repeated. Its principal characters are appended.

Onalaska	Mr. Scott.
Major Waldron	Mr. Durang.
Alfred Leslie	Mr. Duff.
Eugene Grant	Mr. Stevenson.
Captain Musgrave	Mr. Thayer.
Doctor Meredith	Mr. Roberts.
John McArthur	Mr. Anderson.
Miss Polly Jansen	Mrs. Walstein.
Mary Jansen	Mrs. Waring.
Crazy Bet	Mrs. Duff.

Mrs. Duff was very impressive in one or two scenes, but the part was quite unworthy of her powers.

"The Foundling of the Forest" was soon after repeated with as fine a cast as it has ever been honored with, — Mr. Conway as *Count de Valmont* and Mrs. Duff as *Eugenia* being supported by Messrs. Scott, Thayer, Duff, Roberts, Miss Riddle, Mrs. Waring, and Mrs. Walstein.

"Macbeth" was also given three times with great applause, — Conway as *Macbeth*, Duff as *Macduff*, and Mrs. Duff as *Lady Macbeth*. The *Albion* announced that Mr. and Mrs. Duff continued in high favor at the Chatham, and that Mrs. Duff was at length in a fair way to make her great talents known to the people of New York, — adding that it had been a matter of regret to those who knew her that she never before had had an opportunity of doing so.

Mr. Conway, for his benefit June 26, gave "Julius Cæsar," with the following superior cast: *Julius Cæsar*, Mr. Scott; *Marc Antony*, Mr. H. Wallack; *Brutus*, Mr. Conway; *Cassius*, Mr. Duff; *Portia*, Mrs. Duff. This was followed on the 28th by his last appearance in "The Gamester," for the benefit of Mrs. Duff, who of course played *Mrs. Beverley*, a performance supplemented by Mr. Duff's representation of *Looney McTwolter* in "The Review."

The theatre closed for the season on the 17th of July; and during her engagement of less than two months Mrs. Duff had personated eighteen different characters, the longest run of any one play being five nights. Audiences then demanded constant variety,

and immense was the labor for performers. How different from the requirements of to-day, when two or three characters will fill up an actress's time during an entire season.

Mr. and Mrs. Duff were not pleased with Mr. Henry Wallack as a manager, and a serious disagreement occurring between them, the Duffs formed an engagement with Mr. C. W. Sandford (afterwards eminent as a lawyer and major-general of militia), manager of the then lately established Lafayette Theatre; and on the 20th of July, 1826, Mrs. Duff made her first appearance there as *Juliet* to the *Mercutio* of Mr. Thayer and the *Romeo* of Mr. Burroughs. Her position in New York was now well established, and frequent calls were made for her appearance in some particular part; but it was a midsummer season, and she was unable to exert herself so unceasingly as during her Chatham engagement. She here played for the first time in New York her highly pathetic part of *Jeanie Deans* in "The Heart of Mid Lothian," which she repeated several times. Her *Lady Randolph*, to the *Young Norval* of Mr. Burroughs, was pronounced the finest known since the retirement of Mrs. Siddons.

For this engagement of ten weeks Mr. and Mrs. Duff received jointly a salary of fifty-five dollars per week, and the net proceeds of a benefit amounting to two hundred and thirty-four dollars, — in all, seven hundred and eighty-four dollars. How different the emoluments of the profession at the present time, when artists can demand and receive for their services five hundred or a thousand dollars per night!

The salary list of the Lafayette Theatre, now in possession of T. J. McKee, Esq. of New York, shows that such popular performers as W. R. Blake, E. J. Thayer, and Mrs. Pelby received only twenty-five dollars per week; Roberts, the favorite low comedian, thirty dollars; and Mrs. Walstein, the excellent "old woman," the miserable pittance of fifteen dollars. Maywood as a star had thirty-five dollars; Arthur Keene and Mrs. Burke, vocalists, jointly forty dollars; and Burroughs, as actor and stage manager, fifty dollars.

Mrs. Duff soon after fulfilled an engagement at Baltimore, where her only new character was *Bellamira* in Sheil's tragedy of that name, which never attained popularity.

In announcing his programme for the fall season at Chatham Garden, Mr. Henry Wallack included the names of Mr. and Mrs. Duff in the list of his company. This brought forth a card from Mr. Duff in the *Evening Post* of September 20, 1826, as follows: —

"Perceiving in the papers of the day our names associated with the Chatham Garden company, I deem it proper to state that neither Mrs. Duff nor myself has any engagement with Mr. Wallack.

(signed) JOHN DUFF."

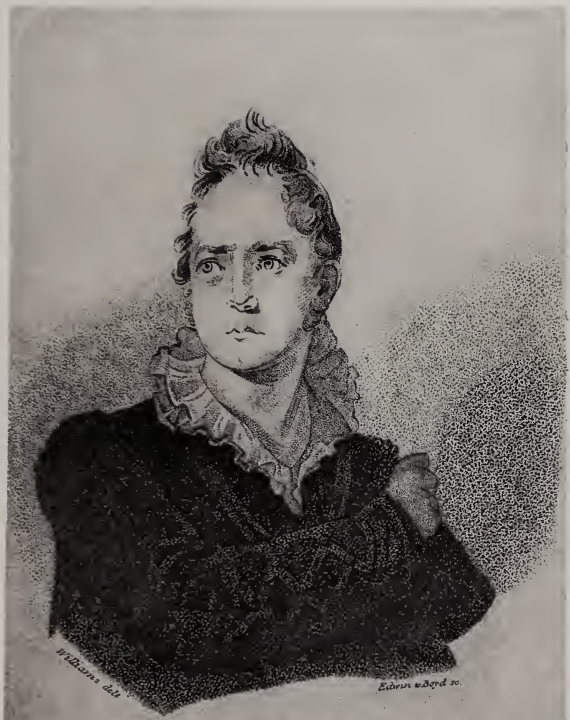
A new theatre having been erected this season in New York by a company of gentlemen, its management was entrusted to Mr. Charles Gilfert, an eminent musician and an experienced manager at Charleston, Albany, and elsewhere. He has been described as a

man of excellent theatrical taste and of recklessly extravagant habits, whose monetary troubles and ultimate death were the results of a copious lack of financial judgment or of simple arithmetical calculation. His character may perhaps be fully understood from the following anecdote told of him in the days when he was the witty and amusing companion of many prominent men about town. The narrator is supposed to be a French resident of Albany at a date anterior to railroad travelling: "Monsieur Charles Gilfert, he come to Albany. He have ruin me in my business, *mes affaires*. He borrow *de l'argent* from me to large amount. He go to New York and promise to send him right away, *ver quick*. But *voyez-vous*, when I write to him he return me von *résponse inconvenante*, von impudent answer, and say I may go to the devil for look for him. I leave Albany instantly to have the *grand* personal satisfaction for the affront he put upon me. I walk straight away from the steamboat. I procure von large stick and rush out to meet him. By-and-by, *bientôt*, I see him von large way off, ver remotely. I button up my coat with strong determination, and hold my stick fierce in my hand to break his neck several times. Ven he come near, my indignation rise. He put out his hand; I reject him. He smile and look over his spectacles at me. I say, you von scoundrel, *coquin infâme!* He smile de more and make *un grand effort* to pacify my grand indignation; and before he leave me, he borrow twenty dollar from me once more, by gar! A ver pleasant man vas Monsieur Charles Gilfert!"

Poor Gilfert! He at length found quiet and repose in the cemetery known as St. John's, in New York, where on his tombstone is inscribed: "Cernit Omnia Deus Vindex" (God the avenger sees everything).

Under the banner of this noted leader at the Bowery Theatre, New York (or the New York Theatre, Bowery, as it was originally called), Mr. Duff now enlisted. He had lost little of his real merit, but his attractiveness had greatly waned. He was to play in light comedy subordinate to George Barrett, who had choice of characters in that line, but was otherwise considered the leading man of the company, — a position to which he was justly entitled by his high reputation, his long experience, and his genuine talent.

Mr. Duff inaugurated his engagement on the opening night of the season, October 23, 1826, by appearing as *Harry Dornton* in "The Road to Ruin" to Mr. Barrett's *Goldfinch*. The company he headed was a fine one, comprising many of the first artists of the day. Mrs. Gilfert was the best of "high comedy ladies" then known, and Mrs. G. Barrett and Mrs. Charles Young were accounted the two most beautiful women on the stage, the former especially being a most excellent and versatile actress. The talent of Mrs. Hughes was unquestionable at this period, when no one could have anticipated her future prominence as *Lady Sowerby Creamly* or *Mrs. Toodles*, while the versatility and compliant disposition of Mrs. H. A. Williams (afterwards Mrs. Maywood) rendered her one of the most useful members of the troupe. Its list of gentlemen included George Barrett, Charles Young,



MR. DUFF AS HAMLET.

"Irish" Faulkner (who was also an excellent "old man"), John A. Stone (the author of "Metamora"), Bernard Jr., Cornelius Logan (father of three celebrated daughters, Eliza, Olive, and Celia), James Roberts, and George Hyatt, — the last two unsurpassed in eccentric and low comedy. These, with a long array of secondary actors and a brilliant constellation of stars, rendered the cast of pieces at the Bowery Theatre unusually strong and satisfactory.

The accession of Mrs. Duff to this fine *corps* was thus announced in the *Evening Post* of November 23: —

"This lady makes her first appearance this evening as *Jane Shore* at the Bowery Theatre. It is one of those characters in which Miss O'Neill shone with peculiar lustre. Mrs. Duff approaches if not fully equals that lady in this and such characters as *Mrs. Beverley*, *Mrs. Haller*, etc. The Baltimore papers speak in unqualified praise of the latter. Why did she not appear in it last night (instead of Mrs. Gilfert) to Conway's *Stranger?*"

Mrs. Duff's *Jane Shore* was enthusiastically received. It was pronounced to be one of the greatest efforts of human genius, and one critic almost imagined that Mrs. Siddons herself stood before him. Her support in the tragedy was from her husband as *Gloster*, Barrett as *Hastings*, Young as *Dumont*, and Mrs. Hughes as *Alicia*.

On the 24th she appeared in "The Gamester" with Mr. Conway, a performance which was thus reviewed in the *Post*: "*Beverley* beyond all comparison is Conway's best performance. Mrs. Duff's *Mrs.*

Beverley is a wonderful effort, and was so acknowledged by the house, for hardly an eye denied the tribute of a tear. There is not a beauty in the dialogue of this most affecting tragedy that was not distinctly marked by this accomplished actress. Her jewels were destined to adorn a wanton, but when *Stukely* proffered love his baseness was revealed, and with one withering look she blasted all the expectations of the villain. How her perfect love and unsullied honor sustained her to the last, how her noble and virtuous nature would still dwell on the happiness that awaited them in days to come, no pen can describe. Her husband expired; she shrieked and dropped upon his lifeless corpse! For a moment all was still; but the next this admirable actress received as proud a tribute as was ever given to dramatic excellence. The impression made by this representation exceeded anything we ever witnessed."

Mrs. Duff's third character was *Lady Macbeth* to Conway's *Thane;* her fourth, *Lady Constance* to his *King John;* her fifth, *Belvidera* to Barrett's *Pierre* and Duff's *Jaffier*.

Of the latter performance the following criticism appeared: —

"Otway's celebrated tragedy of 'Venice Preserved' was represented at the Bowery Theatre on Friday night. The sudden indisposition of Mr. Conway threw the part of *Jaffier* upon Mr. Duff, and he was abundantly rewarded by frequent and well merited applause. This gentleman possesses rare qualifications for the higher efforts of the drama, and we are really curious

to know what it is that obstructs his advancement. Is it indeed because he is not a wandering star? Mr. Barrett's line of acting has nothing to do with the character of *Pierre*. . . . . Mrs. Duff's representation of *Belvidera* was a chaste picture of conflicting passion. Filial piety swayed the bolder claims of the husband, but the cruel sentence which deprived her child of a father, robbed its mother of her reason; and never sure was madness more touchingly or naturally portrayed. This lady has the rare merit of not hunting after passages for a momentary gratification. The course of the story is traced in the quiet progress of events up to the very distraction of her soul under unmerited wrongs, which at last ceases to conflict with her insuperable difficulties."

For his benefit Mr. Conway appeared as *Cardinal Wolsey* in Shakespeare's "King Henry VIII." to the *Henry* of Mr. Young and the *Queen Katherine* of Mrs. Duff, — the first and only time her name has been found in connection with that character. Those who remember the plaintive tenderness of her tones, the majestic dignity of her demeanor, and the forceful grace of her action, need no assurance of the excellence of her delineation.

December 18, 1826, is a red-letter day in the calendar of the Bowery, for it marks the conjunction of Mrs. Duff with Mr. Forrest and Mr. Hamblin, for the first time on its stage, in the tragedy of "Venice Preserved," — Hamblin as *Pierre* and Forrest as *Jaffier* affording the lady's *Belvidera* unwonted excellence of support.

December 26 Mrs. Duff played *Volumnia* to Mr.

Hamblin's *Coriolanus*, one of his finest and best remembered parts. In after years he was the Bowery's most successful manager, and the idol of its not always highly cultivated audience. He took his benefit on the 27th, when he announced, for the first time in New York, Mr. Forrest in the character of *King Lear*, — of all his Shakspearian personations, except *Othello*, the most admired, the greatest, and the best. Hamblin himself played *Edgar;* Duff, *Edmund;* Young, *Kent;* Hyatt, *Oswald;* and Mrs. Duff, *Cordelia.*

1827.

For his own benefit on the 3d of January, 1827, Mr. Forrest attempted *Richard III.*, Mrs. Duff enacting *Queen Elizabeth.* However well received at the time, it was afterwards considered one of his least successful efforts.

On the 9th Mrs. Duff created an immense sensation as *Madame Clermont* in "Adrian and Orilla," the other characters being thus distributed: —

Adrian	Mr. Bernard.
Prince Altenberg	Mr. Duff.
Count Rosenheim	Mr. Faulkner.
Michael	Mr. Roberts.
Lothair	Mrs. Young.
Orilla	Mrs. G. Barrett.
Minna	Mrs. Brazier.
Githa	Mrs. Williams.

For the benefit of the New York Fire Department Fund, January 24, with other entertainments, Mrs.

Duff recited an original poetical address written by Woodworth. She soon after played *Elvira* and *Calanthe* to the *Rolla* and *Damon* of Mr. Forrest.

Mrs. Duff was now at the proudest period of her career, at the very acme of her fame and zenith of her reputation, admired and applauded on all sides, without rivalry in her profession, and yet so amiable and unassuming in her manners that William Gowans, a late well known and respected bookseller and collector of New York, who in early life had occupied a subordinate position on the Bowery boards, has been heard to express and reiterate the opinion that she was the most perfect and indeed the only true lady he had ever met on the stage of the theatre. Her *Madame Clermont* continued to be received with great favor, as may be seen from the following article in the *Albion* of February 10: —

"We have no space to express in sufficient detail our surprise and admiration at the *Madame Clermont* of Mrs. Duff. The play is excessively trashy but *her acting* is peculiarly fine. Since the time of Miss O'Neill we have seen no performer so successful in the delineation of maternal affection. It would be judicious in Mrs. Duff to persuade her husband to make himself master of his author. His inaccuracy and forgetfulness on Tuesday were shameful."

How far this censure may have been deserved it is now impossible to tell, but it no doubt was in some way resented by Mr. Duff, for from this date forward there was a change in the tone of the *Albion's* articles on Mrs. Duff also, whom hitherto it had placed beyond

all competition. It did not cease to praise her, although in a somewhat qualified manner.

Mrs. Duff was now invited to Philadelphia by Mr. Booth, and on the occasion of his benefit at the Chestnut Street Theatre, February 17, appeared for that night only as *Belvidera* to his *Jaffier* and the *Pierre* of Henry Wallack.

Two events of great interest to the dramatic public of New York now occurred in the Court of Common Pleas, through the suits of Henry Wallack against Charles Gilfert and John Duff for loss of services and breach of contract, the reports of which from the papers of the day are herewith appended: —

NEW YORK COURT OF COMMON PLEAS.

JUDGE IRVING, PRESIDING.

March 1, 1827.

WALLACK *vs.* GILFERT.

For damages incurred by the seduction of Mr. and Mrs. Duff from the employ of plaintiff, manager of the Chatham Theatre, by the defendant, manager of the New York Theatre, Bowery.

Henry Dennis, box-keeper of the Chatham Theatre, in his testimony says he has seen Mr. and Mrs. Duff; can form no estimate of their value; Mrs. Duff is an attractive actress and would produce emoluments to any house; Mr. Duff is also an attractive actor; the lady however is the chief attraction. Such an actor and actress would give strength to a company, which

would sustain great loss by their being taken away. Mrs. Duff drew good houses whenever she played.

Richard Hatfield, Master in Chancery, knows Mrs. Duff as an actress: would consider her the main strength of any company, and one of the first actresses in the country. Knows Mr. Duff. He is a very good actor. Mrs. Duff is the principal charm. Would consider the profits of a house enhanced by Mr. Conway and Mrs. Duff performing together.

Mr. Smith was called as a witness, when Mr. W. M. Price (for the defence) remarked that it was unnecessary to introduce any more evidence of the value of Mrs. Duff, as he was willing to admit what he really thought her to be, the *most distinguished actress in this or any other country*. He would also admit Mr. Duff to be a very respectable actor.

Mrs. Mary Ann Duff, sworn: The engagement between Mr. Duff and myself with Mr. Wallack commenced on the 23d of May last.

The letters by which the engagement was made were then read.

The plaintiff here rested his case.

Mr. Price then opened for defendant. Having concluded, he recalled Mrs. Duff.

MRS. DUFF. — Previous to the 1st of July Mr. Duff had no conversation with Mr. Gilfert about an engagement.

QUESTION. — Had you ever communicated to any person that you were disengaged?

MRS. DUFF. — Mr. Eustaphieve, the Russian Consul, called on me, and in the course of conversation asked

where I would perform the next season. I told him I had no engagement for the next season.

The theatre closed on the 15th of July for the purpose of repairing the house. I received no salary from the 15th of July to the 9th of October. The last week's salary for my performance was not paid me. I went twice for it but did not see the manager. I had a conversation with Mr. Wallack about signing certain articles. It took place on the 4th of July. He demanded my signature to the articles. I refused. He then shook them in my face and said I must and should sign them. I again repeated that I would not. He then said his company was governed by those articles and that I was of no more consequence than any other member of his company, and whether I signed them or not I should be governed by them. It was after this that Mr. Eustaphieve called on me. When I said I had no engagement, he replied that he understood I was engaged to Mr. Wallack. I told him I considered that as broken, inasmuch as Mr. Wallack had treated me with much rudeness, and had not paid me my last week's salary. He asked permission of me to say I was disengaged, which I granted him. There was no proviso made in the agreement between my husband and Mr. Wallack by which we were to be deprived of salary during the tearing-down of the theatre.

Cross-examined by Mr. Anthon.

With regard to the last week's salary, I had understood that the funds of the theatre were at the time locked

up in the Tradesmen's Bank by an injunction. About two months after it was due, a person whom I never saw before came and tendered me the salary. It was refused. It was not again tendered me. During the rebuilding of the Chatham Theatre Mr. Duff and myself were engaged at the Lafayette Theatre.

QUESTION. — Another ground of complaint, as alleged by you, was the cast of characters. You refer, do you not, to *Adeline?*

MRS. DUFF. — I do.

QUESTION. — Was not that a favorite character of yours?

MRS. DUFF. — I have no favorite characters.

QUESTION. — Was it not a favorite with the public?

MRS. DUFF. — They have never seen me in it.

QUESTION. — Have you never performed it?

MRS. DUFF. — I have in Philadelphia, not in New York.

QUESTION. — Was it not a favorite there?

MRS. DUFF. — I believe not; the play did not suit.

QUESTION. — Was it repeated?

MRS. DUFF. — It was, twice.

QUESTION. — You were not constrained to perform it here?

MRS. DUFF. — I was not.

The contract by Mr. Duff with Mr. Gilfert, relative to the engagement of Mr. and Mrs. Duff, was here stated by the witness, but we do not think proper to put it before the public. It was dated the 18th of September, 1826.

On resumption of the evidence Mrs. Duff testified that she did not know that Mr. Wallack had sued Mr. Sandford, proprietor of the Lafayette Theatre, for her performance there. Had no reason to, and did not, expect a vacation in the Chatham Theatre at that time. Considered her engagement as for ten successive months. It is not usual for a summer theatre to have a vacation in summer. Is not acquainted with any act or deed of Mr. Gilfert intended to draw us away from the Chatham Theatre.

Mr. John Duff in his testimony says that he recollects the conversation with Mr. Eustaphieve. Met Gilfert accidentally in the coffee-room of the Lafayette Theatre. He asked me if I was engaged to Wallack. I told him, no. He said he did not wish to go to war with any other managers or interfere with them, and would like to know if he might write to me asking if I was engaged. I replied, he might. Such letter however was never received. I mentioned it to Mrs. Duff. She replied she was under some obligation to Mr. Sandford, and considered herself bound to give him the preference. An offer was then made to Mr. Sandford, which he declined on the ground that he could not obtain adequate support for Mrs. Duff. I then considered myself open to a negotiation with Mr. Gilfert.

Jonathan D. Stevenson, present manager of the Chatham, and formerly connected with Mr. Wallack, says: In course of conversation Mrs. Duff said Mr. Wallack certainly could not expect them to remain idle during the vacation. I remarked, "We do not

lose you, madam?" She said, "Oh, no! we return after the vacation."

James Roberts, comedian, testified that he was engaged to Mr. Wallack at the rate of thirty dollars per week, but broke his engagement in consequence of dislike and disagreement with him; that he paid the penalty, one thousand dollars, for breaking his engagement; that he now received forty dollars per week, and fifteen dollars per week for his wife, at the Bowery Theatre; that Mr. Gilfert loaned him one thousand dollars to pay Mr. Wallack, which amount he had returned, excepting two hundred dollars. He did not think the Chatham a desirable place for representing tragedy, in which Mrs. Duff excelled, but that it was more appropriately a theatre for melodrama.

The case was summed up by Messrs. W. M. Price and David Graham for the defendant and by Mr. John Anthon for the plaintiff, and after a short charge by Judge Irving the jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff, with SIX CENTS damages and SIX CENTS costs!

The second suit came off on the following day and is thus reported.

NEW YORK COURT OF COMMON PLEAS,

JUDGE IRVING, PRESIDING.

March 2, 1827.

HENRY WALLACK *vs.* JOHN DUFF.

Mr. John Anthon opened the plaintiff's case. He stated that the contract on which this action was

based had been concluded between the parties in the course of an epistolary correspondence about the 24th of March, 1826, by which the plaintiff became entitled to the services of the defendant and his wife as dramatic performers at the Chatham Theatre for ten months at the joint salary of fifty-five dollars per week; that, in pursuance of the contract so entered into the defendant and his wife came to the city of New York from Philadelphia about the 21st of May last, and entered upon the performance of their engagement at the plaintiff's theatre on the 23d; that they continued to be so employed until about the 15th of July following, when the theatre was closed for the purpose of making extensive repairs, and continued closed until the 9th of October following; that notwithstanding the closing of the theatre the defendant's contract continued in full force, but that, instead of returning to resume his engagement, he and his wife had accepted a more profitable engagement from Mr. Gilfert of the New York Theatre, Bowery, where they were at present employed: that in consequence of this breach of the defendant's agreement the plaintiff had sustained great damage which he now called upon the jury to reimburse.

The correspondence between the parties was then read. It consisted of three letters, the last dated March 24, 1826.

The engagement was that the defendant and his wife should perform for ten months, which are certain, without reduction of salary, at the joint salary of fifty-five dollars per week, — Mrs. Duff to have the entire

range of tragedy and their benefits to amount to from seven to eight hundred dollars, after deducting one hundred and eighty dollars, the expenses of the house.

In Jonathan D. Stevenson's examination he says the Chatham Theatre is not a summer theatre, although it opened as such in 1824; that before its enlargement it would not have contained more than seven hundred dollars in all; that the expenses were about one hundred and eighty dollars, and that a benefit could not yield more than five hundred dollars; that it would now hold one thousand dollars; that Mrs. Duff is a very attractive actress, but that she has sometimes played to thin houses.

Mr. Graham in opening for the defendant stated that the breach of contract in this cause was on the part of the plaintiff himself, in shutting up the theatre and stopping the salary of the defendant and his wife. According to the plaintiff's own evidence the contract had been violated by him. He was bound to obtain the consent of the defendant. This he had not done, but had cast him and his family upon the world for three months without employment and without salary. In addition he had refused to pay their last week's salary, and insisted in the most arbitrary manner upon Mrs. Duff signing certain articles creating an essentially different contract both as to time and services to be rendered, and to be enforced by severe penalties. He had insisted on Mrs. Duff's performing in melodrama, contrary to the terms of contract; and after closing his theatre, so far from finding defendant and

wife employment or continuing their salary, he had declared that they should not perform at the Lafayette Theatre, and that any person who did so should not perform at his theatre again.

John Barnes — comedian, and husband of Mrs. Barnes, the tragic actress — says in his testimony that Mrs. Duff is a great treasure to any theatre, but considers the Chatham more suited to melodrama than tragedy, the former being more attractive there.

Charles Gilfert says: Mrs. Duff is an eminent and attractive actress. Her principal value to a manager would consist in her appearing seldom, and in sending her at times to Philadelphia or Boston. She has played at the Bowery Theatre to as low a sum as sixty-one dollars and a half. Five hundred dollars is the largest house she has played to, and then she had the assistance of Mr. Conway. Every manager keeps books showing the receipts of the house every night. Presumes the plaintiff keeps such books. Has been a manager since 1817. Would consider the closing of the Chatham Theatre at the time and under the circumstances a violation of agreement if the salaries of the performers were not continued.

James Roberts, comedian, testified as to the melodramatic character of the Chatham Theatre, and the great success of "The Lady of the Lake" and "Brian Boroihme;" that Mrs. Duff when first there drew good houses, but "Brian Boroihme," drew better ones. Mrs. Duff had a benefit at the Chatham while he played there. Does not remember Mr. Duff having one. The other actors were paid while the injunction remained on the Tradesmen's Bank.

Nicholas Dean, Clerk of the City and County, says Mrs. Duff is a most distinguished actress, but has seen her play to very thin houses at the Bowery Theatre.

William R. Blake produced the blank articles of agreement used at the Chatham Theatre. They provide for a vacation of two months, in *January* and *February*.

After the summing up by the counsel and the charge by Judge Irving, the jury returned, after an hour's absence, with a verdict for DEFENDANT.

Mrs. Duff's benefit quickly followed the termination of these trials, the result of which gave general satisfaction. It occurred on the 5th of March and was most liberally patronized. All the city papers called attention to her bill, which consisted of "Adrian and Orilla" and a new farce called "Returned Killed," in which Mr. Duff assumed the character of *Milligan*.

The *Evening Post* of that date said: "Mr. Kean has pronounced her *Madame Clermont*, which she has chosen for her benefit, the most finished performance he ever witnessed. We are confident there will be a rush to see it."

The *Enquirer* added: "Mrs. Duff has chosen 'Adrian and Orilla,' in which her talents have made so deep an impression. *Madame Clermont* is her best performance. Mrs. Duff has recently escaped from the perils of a lawsuit. In the first trial she gave her testimony in the clearest and most unassuming manner and, though subjected to a severe cross-examination, nothing could exceed the consistency and propriety

of her answers. In the second trial the jury pronounced her conduct irreproachable. Will not the public concur in that opinion?"

And the *Albion*, a few days after, in noticing the occurrence, stated that "Mrs. Duff had her benefit on Monday. The play was 'Adrian and Orilla,' in which she sustains with vast ability the part of *Madame Clermont*. The circumstances of the recent trials in relation to this lady's engagement at the Bowery Theatre created a strong excitement in her favor, and drew a numerous audience."

On the 7th of March, for the first time, she played her since very celebrated character of *Adelgitha*, for the benefit of Mrs. Blake. Mr. Charles Young supported her as *Guiscard*, Mr. Blake (then young and handsome) as *Lothair*, Mr. G. Barrett (severely out of place) as *Michael Ducas*, and Mrs. G. Barrett as *Imma*.

Arthur Keene, the vocalist, took a benefit here on the 12th of March, appearing as *Francis Osbaldistone* in "Rob Roy," — Henry Wallack making his first appearance at the Bowery as the *Highland Chieftain*, Mr. Roberts enacting his favorite part of the *Baillie*, Mrs. Blake giving the music of *Diana Vernon*, and Mrs. Duff seeming to be the actual *Helen Macgregor* herself.

Many comments were made on this unexpected conjunction of talent so soon after the late suits at law, and one from the *Albion* is here introduced: "On Monday by particular desire Mr. Keene had a benefit, and the house was greatly thronged. The opera was 'Rob Roy,' in which Mr. Henry Wallack played *Rob*.

Mr. Wallack, as every one knows, the manager of the Chatham, had only last week brought an action against Mr. Gilfert of the Bowery for seducing away Mrs. Duff; yet within a few days he volunteers to act upon Mr. Gilfert's stage as Mrs. Duff's dramatic husband. We do not understand these things and perhaps they are not worth understanding. Wallack is a good *Rob Roy* but considerably inferior to Maywood. The *Helen* of Mrs. Duff is a first-rate performance, forcible in the declamatory and affecting in the pathetic parts."

In speaking of the performance the *Mirror* said: —

"We have but a word more; it is in relation to Mrs. Duff. The part of *Helen Macgregor* is not suited to her transcendent powers, but '*nil tetigit quod non ornavit*' was never better applied than in relation to that admirable performer. Her burst of feeling when the lament comes wailing through the rocks of the Highlands and she learns what toils have been woven around her husband; her high and haughty charge to *Francis Osbaldistone;* her agonized parental emotions as she strains her children to her breast; and then the thrilling exclamation which escapes her when the name of *Rob* is echoed through the mountains, and safe and unharmed he folds her in his arms, — were all conceived and executed in — but we need not seek for epithets; it was nature itself!

"Many are of the opinion that the frequent witnessing of theatrical representations hardens instead of humanizes our hearts. To such we would say that we sat in the same box with an actor whose province it is to

smooth the wrinkles on the brow of care, and whose original humor in that house has always called forth peals of laughter. *We saw the big tears roll down his cheeks for the well depicted sufferings of Helen Macgregor.* Mrs. Duff will appreciate the compliment when we tell her that the *tears of Hyatt* attested the excellence of her performance."

On March 15 Mrs. Duff appeared in "The Distrest Mother," calling forth, in the following terms, one of those slurring compliments heretofore alluded to, and peculiar to the *Albion* alone: "We have no room to speak of 'The Distrest Mother' except to laud Mrs. Duff's *Hermione*, and to wish that she would be a little less tragic in her tragedy. Horace says that people who wish to make others weep should begin by weeping themselves; but he never meant that they should keep their visages in a perpetual state of irrigation. With this exception Mrs. Duff is without a superior on the American stage."

Among thousands of notices in American papers on Mrs. Duff's performances the above are the only disparaging remarks that have been found.

Mrs. Duff next played *Cora* in "Columbus;" and again *Elvira* to Alexander Wilson's *Rolla*, in which she seemed to evince extraordinary power, her last scene being pronounced sublime. Her succeeding characters were *Angela* in "The Castle Spectre," *Lady Randolph, Florinda, Therese, Desdemona*, and *Imogine* to Forrest's *Bertram*, which was thus noticed by the *Mirror*: —

"We must now speak of Mrs. Duff, and we hardly

know how to say enough in her praise. Those who are fond of strong excitement will not find an entertainment more suited to their taste than her enactment of *Imogine*, but persons who cannot depend on the strength of their nerves should not venture to witness it. We believe that there were very few present on the occasion of which we speak whose looks were not sometimes stiffened with horror as she depicted the woes of the heroine."

Her long engagement terminated with a second benefit on the 25th of July, when she appeared as *Elvira* (with Forrest as *Rolla*) and as *Annette* in "The Maid and Magpie." During the season she had appeared upwards of sixty times and represented twenty-six different characters, — *Belvidera*, *Calanthe*, *Elvira*, *Madame Clermont*, and *Queen Elizabeth* taking precedence in the number of repetitions.

Mrs. Duff had now established as high a reputation in New York as in Boston or Philadelphia, and press and people were lavish in her praise.

Of all the articles written on her performances and summing up her merits, none perhaps was more just and discriminating than the following which appeared in the *Mirror* of May 5, 1827: —

"Mrs. Duff. This lady is decidedly the best actress in our country.

"We have for a long time intended to speak of her in a separate article and more at length than the limits of a notice of the performances through the week would permit. The subject however is one of difficulty. There are few who are not able to appreciate

good playing, but there are fewer who are capable of conveying to the mere reader anything like a distinct idea of an actor's merits.

"To Mrs. Duff in particular this observation applies. In her style of acting there are none of those prominent points, none of those strongly marked characteristics, which are of such service to the dramatic critic in his observations on the stage.

"Mrs. Duff has one great characteristic, one remarkable peculiarity that strikes all who see her, and that is *uniformity of excellence.* She makes no points. We cannot say of her as we used to say of Kean, — 'that's a beautiful touch.' Her merits and defects (though the latter are few in number and trivial in moment) pervade the whole of every character she undertakes. There is no singling them out and saying 'such a speech was given in a pre-eminently fine manner, and in such a scene she did not seem to have a full conception of her author's meaning.' From beginning to end, from her first entrance to her final exit, you see before you only the character she is personating. The unity of her conception — the *oneness* — is remarkable. No temptation can induce her to break it. If a scene offer ever so much opportunity for display, and it be a display not authorized by the whole design and tenor of the part, she suffers it to pass by unnoticed.

"This is the perfection of her art. This is the way to deceive and delight an audience. They forget they are in a theatre, and 'live o'er the scene.'

"If a noise occur in the gallery Mrs. Duff exhibits

no consciousness of it as many very naturally do, thus permitting the player to be seen through the regal robe or sacerdotal habit.

"She seems to have a separate existence during the continuance of the play, and to have lost all knowledge of, and even all power of seeing, the realities around her. Kean used to startle us by electric flashes; Mrs. Barnes occasionally shines out with great brilliancy; but Mrs. Duff pours out one unceasing blaze during the whole time she occupies the stage. We do not mean to say that there is a uniformity of interest in all she does, but a uniformity of excellence.

"In an important passage she gives us no declamation or rant on the one hand, and on the other she does not think it beneath her powers and slight it.

"The playing of this lady may be compared to the poetry of Goldsmith. No fits and starts, no rising and falling, except as the dignity of the subject varies. There is scarcely a person who ever read 'The Deserted Village' for the first time who did not think himself capable of writing as well, till by the experiment he became convinced of his error. This arises from the truth of the sentiment, and the care and beautiful polish the author has bestowed on that admirable production. So it is with Mrs. Duff's acting. At first when we see her we are like *Partridge* in Fielding's novel, and are ready to exclaim, 'Psha, there is no great excellence in that.' This impression however is of no great duration, and we soon are willing to acknowledge that her art is perfect in proportion as it assimilates itself to nature.

"In the Bourbonic Museum at Naples there is a large fragment of an unfinished statue of Hercules. It is unfinished, but every line and trace about it declare it to have been the work of a master genius. So it is with the playing of several of our prominent actresses, but it is not so with Mrs. Duff, whose work is finished at every point.

"Since we have drawn an illustration from sculpture, we might properly speak of her style as bearing a resemblance to the immortal Phidian Goddess, every feature of which is true to nature, but which presents a whole more beautiful than Nature's choicest works. Who that has seen Mrs. Duff in the part of *Jane Shore*, for example, will not perceive the aptness of the remark? In every line, in every word, she is true to the author, and departs not in a single instance from his delineation; yet the character as given by her is one of far greater dignity than Rowe had the ability to draw."

After a few weeks' rest Mrs. Duff appeared at the Park Theatre on the 27th of September in conjunction with Mr. Cooper, their opening play being "Venice Preserved." She was here seen as *Belvidera*, *Lady Macbeth*, *Madame Clermont*, *Imogine*, *Volumnia*, *Eugenia*, — and on her benefit night, her last before visiting Europe, as *Virginia*, for the first time in New York. Although their off-nights were occupied by the powerful attraction of the first engagement in New York of Clara Fisher, whose popularity brought her a benefit of sixteen hundred and eleven dollars, Mrs. Duff and Mr. Cooper were liberally and fashionably patronized,

and universal regret was expressed at the lady's intended absence.

Mrs. Duff next proceeded to Boston, where she commenced an engagement on the 17th of October. After playing a few nights the critics of our modern Athens were incensed to find that Hackett and Barnes, in their great hit of the *Two Dromios*, were absorbing most of the patronage of the public. Some of the newspaper articles are here reproduced.

From the *Boston Gazette*, Oct. 22, 1827, we quote :—

"The stage for the past week has indeed presented a 'Comedy of Errors.' The high soaring of genius has been unheeded, and senseless mimicry and grimace have borne the ascendant.

"It is a singular fact that an actress of more decided talent in tragedy than any one on the English stage at this hour, has performed three nights at the Federal Street Theatre to little better than bare walls. Nor can our play-going community plead ignorance of her merits; here they first electrified an audience, and here they first burst forth from obscurity into sunshine.

"At this moment Mrs. Duff is more highly gifted than ever; her powers have ripened into matured excellence, and in her particular line her contemporaries readily yield her the palm. We think she has greatly improved since her last visit, and are convinced she can make a stand in any theatre whatever.

"On Friday evening we saw her for the first time in *Madame Clermont*, and since her wonderful effort in *Hermione* we have seen nothing to equal it. In the last scene she seemed to throw off her identity, and

looked and moved as a supernatural being; her face assumed a cast altogether Siddonian, and her hurried and pathetic tones penetrated us with an involuntary shudder. We could only lament the capriciousness of taste which would disregard such talent in pursuit of buffoonery and farce."

The *Boston Traveller*, Oct. 23, 1827, said: —

"MRS. DUFF. There has been nothing more surprising in the annals of our stage than that this lady should in the least lack public patronage. Mrs. Duff is undoubtedly the Siddons of the American stage. We have seen no other so fitted, both personally and mentally, to take the highest stand in her profession. In the soul-subduing qualities of her voice, so touching in its pathos and awakening in its energy, Nature has been most liberal to her. The outline of her head and face is classic, and her eyes are brilliant and powerful. She never fails to carry her audience along with her, and so completely embodies the properties with which an author invests the character, that her representations are unerringly true to nature.

"Our stage is occasionally illuminated by the genius of such men as Kean, Macready, and Forrest, but first-rate female talent has been almost unknown to us. Would it not seem that its very rarity should cause it to be cherished? Why, then, is Mrs. Duff neglected?"

The *Boston Gazette*, Oct. 25, 1827, said: —

"MRS. DUFF. This lady's performance of *Isabella* was throughout the most finished and effective representation which we have witnessed of the character. Her chief power undoubtedly lies in the pathetic, to

which indeed every lineament of her speaking face seems to be attuned. Nothing could exceed the exquisite pathos of her manner in giving the ring to *Villeroy*, or her subdued frenzy and death scene in the play. Although her audience was not numerous, it was composed for the most part of those who can best appreciate the efforts of genius, and whose breathless attention gave the happiest commentary on her success. We have assurance from them and others that she shall not leave Boston without a proper indemnity for her exertions, and we think it proper to state that they will be used to-morrow evening for her benefit, on which occasion she will appear as *Adelgitha*, in the play of that name, for the first time in Boston."

The *Boston Courier* said: "We are assured by several gentlemen in her profession, who have recently arrived from England, that there is no lady at present on the stage who can be considered as in any degree her rival."

The *Boston Traveller* responded: "Her place cannot be supplied, as it is granted by all who have seen her that she has no equal on this side of the Atlantic nor any superior on the British stage."

Her benefit attracted a fashionable house, and her unrivalled powers were never more successfully exerted than on that evening; so said the public press.

A brief re-engagement followed for the support of Mr. Forrest, who made his first appearance on the 2d of November as *Damon*, and afterwards in succession personated *Rolla*, *Virginius*, *Othello*, *Brutus*, and *Bertram*, Mrs. Duff being the *Calanthe*, *Elvira*, *Virginia*,

Desdemona, *Tullia*, and *Imogine*, — the latter for her final benefit on the 15th of the month.

Mrs. Duff and her husband sailed from Boston on the ship "New England" for Liverpool on the 4th of December, 1827. Steam-packets were yet unknown, and at that period of the year it may be imagined that the voyage was not over pleasant or very speedy. After Mr. Duff had taken his passage, he was disturbed by a dream in which he beheld the destruction by shipwreck of the vessel in which he was to sail. This made such an impression upon his mind that he changed his tickets for those on a packet to leave at a later date, in which he and his wife reached their destination in safety; but in Liverpool he learned that the former ship had not yet arrived, nor was she ever heard of again. The story of this dream has been converted into quite another shape, and has been told in print as follows: "Mrs. Duff, after her widowhood, had formed an engagement of marriage with Mr. Conway, the tragedian, who soon after sailed for Savannah. A few nights after his departure the apparent ghost of the tragedian appeared to Mrs. Duff in a dream. On awakening, she wrote down the circumstances, date, and hour. Soon news arrived that Mr. Conway had committed suicide by plunging into the sea off Charleston Harbor on the very night and hour of the strange dream." The incorrectness of this version of the story will be at once perceived when it is remembered that Mrs. Duff did not become a widow until April, 1831, and that Mr. Conway had perished in the spring of 1828, three years before. But to return to this London engagement.

1828.

The American public was anxious to learn the result of the experiment; but nothing was heard of the Duffs until April, when the news came that Mrs. Duff, after playing a preliminary and successful engagement at Brighton, had appeared on the boards of Drury Lane Theatre on the 3d of March, 1828, in the tragedy of "Isabella," with the following cast: —

Biron	Mr. Macready.
Count Baldwin	Mr. Younge.
Carlos	Mr. Wallack.
Villeroy	Mr. Cooper.
Belford	Mr. Mude.
Sampson	Mr. J. Russell.
Nurse	Mrs. C. Jones.
Child	Miss Lane.
Isabella	Mrs. Duff.

(From the Theatre Royal, Dublin; her first appearance in London.)

Of the above cast, it may be remarked that Miss Lane is the sole survivor, and that she is now known in America as the very talented Mrs. John Drew (1882).

Why Mrs. Duff was announced as from Dublin has not been explained, but probably from a desire to avoid the prejudice, then supposed to exist in London, against everything American; and especially because Thomas A. Cooper, the foreign born but naturalized American actor, had recently been almost hissed from the boards on his first appearance as *Macbeth*. Mrs. Duff had originally played at the Dublin Theatre; so the announcement, though deceptive, was not altogether fictitious.

The comments of the London press were very various. The *Theatrical Observer* condemned her performance, and said she wanted energy, action, and — most of all — mind. Still it acknowledged that she was received with some favor. The *London Atlas* spoke of her as a respectable but not a remarkable performer, and the *Gazette* observed that her fright was so excessive as to prevent the possibility of forming a decided opinion relative to her merits.

Bell's Weekly Messenger, however, gave a very different expression of opinion. It said: "The tragedy of 'Isabella' was performed for the purpose of introducing a Mrs. Duff in that character. The lady is pleasing in features, elegant in person, and seems to possess a thorough knowledge of the business of the stage. She performed *Isabella* with considerable effect. There was a graceful ease in her deportment, a proper conception of the author, and an impassioned manner in the delivery of the text, which appeared to make considerable impression on the audience, which was very numerous."

But these remarks were tame compared with the criticism which appeared in the *London Age*, herewith annexed: —

"The house was not full, and the audience by no means one of those we sometimes find in theatres on first nights, predetermined to applaud whatever was not absolutely repulsive. On the contrary we never saw a house in the beginning much more indifferent, nor did we ever see a more thorough triumph over such indifference. The applause at first was reluctant

and guarded, but in every succeeding scene it increased in frequency and fervor, until at length, when the second appearance of the actress was announced, it rose to absolute enthusiasm. Under such circumstances the triumph, of course, must have been complete, and the actress had the right to prize it more dearly from its having been accorded without favor, and only after a clear, unbiassed conviction that it could not with honesty have been denied.

"Mrs. Duff appears to be about eight and twenty. Her figure is good, and her action graceful but not redundant. She seems perfectly self-possessed. From the moment she came upon the stage until the moment she left it there appeared an utter unconsciousness about her of an audience. She was absorbed in the character she represented. She gave not only every situation but every syllable in such a manner as would have most delighted Southern himself, and was never disheartened by any omission to notice the more delicate and most beautiful touches, nor betrayed into extravagance by the eagerness with which the more obvious — and consequently less valuable — points were seized upon by the audience and vehemently clapped. Her eye is the finest since the time of Mrs. Siddons. Her voice is full of expression, but unequal. She has not, in fact, what the French call *tears in her voice*, and consequently was less touching in her tears than in the anguish beyond the power of weeping, which she conveys with surpassing excellence.

"It will be the fault of the management if Mrs. Duff does not do great things for Drury Lane Theatre.

There is no actress in her line, now on the London stage, with so much intellectual energy; and though many surpass her in physical force, the former quality, though it may not achieve so quick a fame for her, will secure her one of higher value and infinitely more lasting."*

It is very probable that Mrs. Duff was not at her best on this occasion; it would indeed have been singular if she had been. An appearance in a strange theatre (enormous in size, and designated by Mrs. Siddons herself as "the wilderness"), before an unfamiliar audience, and in a foreign land, has usually in it something appalling, even to the most self-confident. In Mrs. Duff's case anxiety for the result undoubtedly somewhat embarrassed her, and in a measure paralyzed her powers. She wrote to her friend Mrs. Charles Durang that she had never before suffered so much from stage-fright, and that the applause at the conclusion of the play was so tremendous that it entirely unnerved her. In truth the strain upon her nervous system had been so great that she was prostrated under its effects and prevented by illness from making her second appearance until the 14th of April, when she again came forward in the tragedy of "Adelgitha," supported by John Cooper as *Guiscard*, Charles Kean as *Lothair* (in which character he was decidedly condemned), Wallack

* A similar diversity of opinion among theatrical critics was noticeable during the recent visits to London of Mr. Edwin Booth and Mr. John McCullough; but, as in Mrs. Duff's case, the audience signified approval, and the gentlemen remained long enough to convince even captious critics of their high deserts.

as *Michael Ducas*, and the lovely Miss Foote, since Countess of Harrington, as *Imma*.

Adelgitha, though a less favorite character with the audience, was admitted to have been better performed than *Isabella*, and it increased the favorable impression made by the actress. Even the *Theatrical Observer*, which had previously said that she lacked mind, now acknowledged that she had good sense, understood thoroughly her author, and possessed talents which might be of service to the theatre.

Bell's Weekly Messenger followed up its previous opinion by saying that Mrs. Duff made the most of the character and displayed talents of no ordinary kind; that she became a great acquisition to Drury Lane; and, if not comparable to a Siddons or an O'Neill, was at least superior to the actresses who of late had aspired to the highest rank in her art.

With these accounts of her favorable reception, and the prospect of increasing success, the theatrical public was soon after astounded to hear of Mrs. Duff's unexpected return to America.

Many were the reasons imagined and assigned by the press of America for this sudden change of programme, — the most general being the determination of the English public to show no favor to American talent or to allow that any good thing could come out of Nazareth; and just retaliation was recommended by certain journals against such English actors as might hereafter seek employment on our shores!

The *New York Albion* took perhaps the most sensible view of the subject in its issue of July 5, 1828,

when it said: "It has never been satisfactorily explained why Mrs. Duff left England so precipitately, where a person of her talents is evidently wanted and where her début had been so fortunate. Without pretending to be in any one's secrets we think we can undertake to declare that all the theories invented by the newspapers for the solution of this are very wide of the mark. It is sufficient for us now to express our gratification that Mrs. Duff has returned and that we are likely to retain so clever a woman among us."

There were no doubt several reasons combined which induced the determination of a return to America, one of which was probably a disagreement between Stephen Price, — then manager of Drury Lane, — and Mr. Duff regarding Mrs. Duff's salary. For the two nights that she played she received — nothing! Another was that even with a liberal salary the expenses of a residence in London with their large family would absorb it all. Mr. Duff probably came to the conclusion that although Mrs. Duff's fame might be increased by a London engagement, their general prosperity would be advanced by a return to America, where they were so widely known and highly esteemed. And perhaps the most powerful of all was to be found in Mrs. Duff's family pride, grief, and disappointment. On her arrival in England her sister, Mrs. Moore, did not come near her, but sent word from a fashionable watering-place that it would not be convenient to receive her. Her mother and her younger sister were dead, and Mr. Duff's health was in a failing condition. So their visions of the gold and glory that were to be gained on

British ground were summarily dispelled; and on the 20th of May, landing from the ship "Amethyst" at Boston, our voyagers once more set foot upon the shores of America.

They had scarcely reached the wharf when an engagement was concluded with Mrs. Duff by Messrs. Finn and Kilner, of the Federal Street Theatre, for her appearance there on the 22d and 30th of May, the only two nights before the close of the season that were unappropriated. On these occasions she played *Mrs. Haller* and *Isabella*, the parts of the *Stranger* and *Biron* being assumed by Mr. Finn. The houses were full and fashionable, and her reappearance was greeted in the most enthusiastic manner.

She was also engaged for one night at the little town of Salem, where she played *Isabella* to a crowded house.

On the 17th of June she triumphantly reappeared at the Chatham Garden Theatre, New York, in the character of *Mrs. Haller* to the *Stranger* of Mr. Maywood. *Florinda*, *Eugenia*, and *Adelgitha* followed in succession.

On the 28th she appeared at the Park Theatre (for the last time) for Mr. Booth's benefit, as *Florinda* to his *Pescara*. In return, for Mrs. Duff's benefit at the Chatham, Booth volunteered as *Jaffier* to her *Belvidera* in "Venice Preserved." She terminated her engagement July 3, as *Isabella*.

A most admirable company was this season gathered at the Chatham, including Alexander Wilson (who at one period of his career was thought the equal of

Forrest), Scott, Kilner, Geo. Barrett, Blake, Walton, Roberts, George Andrews, Crooke, Mrs. Barrett, Mrs. Hughes, Mrs. Turner, as well as Miss Amelia Fisher and her sister Mrs. Vernon, — the last well remembered as the "dear old lady" of Wallack's Theatre, who at this period played soubrettes and rustics with equal skill and vivacity, though her merits were not as clearly recognized as in later years. Of the entire corps Miss Amelia Fisher is the sole survivor, and she is in her old age a cheerful and prosperous resident of Boston.

On the 4th of August Mrs. Duff commenced an engagement at Providence, R. I., during which she personated *Jane Shore*, *Eugenia*, *Isabella*, *Mrs. Haller*, *Queen Elizabeth*, — and, for the first time, the touching character of *Clari* in Howard Payne's opera of that name. Her reception is thus described by a Providence paper: —

"On Monday evening Mrs. Duff made her first appearance these five years in the character of *Jane Shore*. Her entrance was greeted with loud, long, and enthusiastic applause, mingled with those just and generous tokens of friendship which evidently affected the distinguished actress and for a moment forbade her uttering the language of the dramatist. It is not a new thing to say that Mrs. Duff is the first and ablest actress of the age; this fact has as often been admitted as repeated, and we cannot believe that her delineation of the misguided *Shore* has ever been surpassed by a Siddons or O'Neill."

Her whole engagement in Providence was played to large and fashionable audiences.

For the winter season Mr. Duff was employed at the Federal Street Theatre, Boston, and played when his health permitted; but Mrs. Duff accepted an engagement at the new Tremont Theatre, at a salary of fifty dollars per week and four clear benefits during the season. This appears to be the largest salary she ever received for her individual services during her entire career, although at the present time it would be thought utterly beneath the notice of any ordinary leading actress.

Mrs. Duff was to have opened at the Tremont Theatre on the 15th of October but was prevented by sickness from appearing until the 29th, when the Tremont bills bore the following heading: —

"The manager has the pleasure to announce that Mrs. Duff, having recovered from her indisposition, will make her first appearance this evening in the part of *Florinda*. In order to gratify the wishes of many individuals that Mrs. Duff would appear in two of her most celebrated characters in conjunction with Mr. Booth, an arrangement has been made with Mr. Booth to prolong his engagement for two nights, for the purpose of appearing in the characters of *Pescara* in 'The Apostate' and *Orestes* in 'The Distrest Mother,' the parts of *Florinda* and *Hermione* by Mrs. Duff."

This arrangement was carried out with brilliant success and was followed by the engagement of Mr. Wallack, to whose *Rolla*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, Mrs. Duff appeared as *Elvira*, *Ophelia*, and *Lady Macbeth*.

On the 13th of November she went to the Federal Street Theatre to play *Mrs. Haller* for her husband's

benefit; and on the 19th took her own at the Tremont as *Juliet*, with Wallack as her *Romeo* and Cooper as *Mercutio*, when she was honored with a crowded and fashionable house. Theatrical etiquette at that time demanded the announcement of an immediate re-engagement, and on the 24th of November she reappeared as *Mrs. Beverley* to Cooper's *Gamester*, — and for his benefit, on the 26th, as *Calanthe* to his *Damon* and *Katherine* to his *Petruchio*. On the 28th the present distinguished and unrivalled veteran of Wallack's Theatre, John Gilbert, made his début on the stage with entire success as *Jaffier* — to Alexander Wilson's *Pierre* and Mrs. Duff's *Belvidera* — in "Venice Preserved." A living witness of her extraordinary skill, he has recently acknowledged that he never saw her superior.

On the 10th of December Mrs. Duff took her second benefit, as *Statira* to the beautiful Mrs. Pelby's *Roxana* and Wilson's *Alexander the Great.*

She now made a short excursion to Philadelphia, and it was hoped that her former great popularity would attract a paying house at the Chestnut Street Theatre where dramatic entertainments had become almost totally neglected. The receipts per night sometimes did not reach twenty-five dollars; and a combination of three stars, Henry Hunt, Sophia Phillips, and Clara Fisher, attracted only sixty dollars. She opened there on the 24th of December as *Bellamira* to a hundred and forty-one dollars, and followed with *Florinda*, *Mrs. Beverley*, *Mrs. Haller*, — and *Adelgitha* for her benefit, on the 31st, when the receipts reached two hundred and twenty-eight dollars. She gave an

additional night as *Juliet*, for the benefit of Mr. Southwell who played *Romeo*, but only to a fifty-two dollar house!

1829.

On her return to Boston in January, 1829, she supported Mr. Hamblin during an engagement in the course of which she played *Queen Elizabeth*, *Mrs. Haller*, *Jane Shore*, *Calanthe*, *Belvidera*, and *Helen Macgregor*, — the latter for the benefit of the celebrated Madame Feron, who played *Diana Vernon* to Horn's *Francis Osbaldistone* and Hamblin's *Rob Roy*. Her *Jane Shore*, in particular, made a deep impression on the audience, and sent her hearers weeping to their beds. One auditor said: "The closing scenes had touches which went directly to the heart. We shall long remember the faded face, the melancholy sweetness, the imploring up-turned eye, when asking aid from the cold hand of charity and spurned from the door where once she found a ready welcome. There was dumb eloquence in her grief which mocked all clamorous sorrow."

On the 22d of February Mrs. Duff was again entitled to a benefit and produced, for the first time in Boston, Miss Mitford's tragedy of "Rienzi," with Hamblin as the hero, Mr. Archer as *Adrian Colonna*, Mrs. Pelby as *Lady Colonna*, and her own assumption of *Claudia*. The press now called attention to the fact of her husband's illness and the necessity of a liberal patronage, as the support of her large family (seven children) devolved entirely on her own exertions, — one paper saying that "the cares and anxieties of her home

life, added to the tasks of her stage avocations, would seem sufficient to depress the most active spirit; and they would of any woman whose genius was not, like Mrs. Duff's, wakened and warmed with something higher than the mere desire of popular applause."

Mr. Wallack commenced an engagement on the 11th of March as *Rolla*, when, for the first time in several years, Mrs. Duff resumed her original personation of *Cora*, for that night only. She subsequently played *Desdemona* to his *Othello*, *Claudia* to his *Rienzi*, *Juliet* to his *Romeo*, — and for his benefit returned to *Elvira* in "Pizarro," Mrs. Papanti, a favorite vocalist, being substituted as *Cora*. On the 8th of April her fourth benefit occurred, when she presented J. N. Barker's tragedy of "Superstition," wherein she appeared as *Mary* for the first time in Boston, and also enacted there for the first time *Portia* in the Trial scene of "The Merchant of Venice."

The press was more than usually emphatic in its appeals to the public for its patronage, as the previous benefits had not equalled Mrs. Duff's just expectations. An impression seemed at the time to prevail that Mrs. Duff's name was placed at the head of the bill for the manager's benefit rather than her own, an opinion which was distinctly denied in the following article from the *Daily Advertiser* of April 8: "A report has been very prevalent that the proceeds of this evening are not actually for the benefit of Mrs. Duff; but we have it in our power to state that the actual receipts of money arising from the sale of tickets this night, after deducting the current expenses of the house, are wholly hers."

The bills of April 16 bore the annexed heading: "The performances of Mrs. Duff having received great approbation the public is respectfully informed that she is engaged for the remainder of the season and will appear this evening, for the first time this season, as *Therese* in 'The Orphan of Geneva.'"

On the 22d she appeared as *Mathilde* in the first performance of a drama called "The Bohemian Mother" in which she made one of her greatest hits. She repeated it fourteen nights during the balance of the season, and ultimately it was represented by her a greater number of times than any other character.

Her performance was thus noticed by the *Boston Traveller:* "The part of *Mathilde* is peculiarly adapted to the fine, sympathetic powers of Mrs. Duff; and she seems very wisely to seize hold of the advantage and, in the tender and affecting scenes, almost go beyond herself. Its effect upon the audience is striking. They are by degrees attracted to what is passing before them, and insensibly become spellbound, holding a breathless silence until the charm is broken either by the termination of the scene or by the sobbing aloud of some warm-hearted lady who was unable longer to repress her feelings."

Another drama of a somewhat similar character entitled "Ambrose Gwinett," in which Mrs. Duff represented the heroine, *Lucy Fairlove*, also met with marked favor. Sensationalism then, as now, was sure of popular appreciation and applause.

Mr. Booth, always a favorite in Boston, next had an engagement during which Mrs. Duff appeared as *Queen*

Elizabeth, *Florinda*, and *Hermione* to his *Richard*, *Pescara*, and *Orestes*. For her fifth and final benefit, June 25, he appeared as the *Stranger* to her *Mrs. Haller*.

Again at the Tremont Theatre, for the regular season of 1829–30, Mrs. Duff opened her engagement on the 16th of September in her popular character of the *Bohemian Mother*. Her attraction was sometimes combined with that of Mademoiselle Celeste, the celebrated *danseuse*, then in the first flush of youthful loveliness; sometimes with that of the charming vocalist, Mrs. Edward Knight, or the "Mocking-bird Squaw" as an Indian hearer once designated her; and sometimes with that of Mr. Cooper, for whose benefit on the 3d of October she personated *Mrs. Haller* to his first performance in Boston of the *Stranger*.

In November "The Ethiop," in which she played *Cephania*, was revived and run six consecutive nights, and in the same month, with Mr. Booth, she again appeared in several popular tragedies.

On the 4th of December, for the first time in Boston, Shakespeare's "Richard II" was performed, with Mr. Booth as *Richard*, Mr. Wilson as *John of Gaunt*, Mr. W. H. Smith as *Bolingbroke*, Mr. Thayer as *Percy*, and Mrs. Duff as *Queen Isabel*, — a part which she does not seem ever to have repeated.

On the 7th of the month she first undertook Sheil's *Evadne* in the tragedy of that name, and was progressing triumphantly with it when Mr. Booth, who was cast for the character of *Ludovico*, broke down completely in the third act of the play, which was thus brought to an abrupt conclusion.

On the 13th Mrs. Duff took her benefit in a new tragedy on the story of Mary Stuart (probably adapted from Schiller's popular drama), in which she, of course, assumed the rôle of the unfortunate queen. Mrs. G. Barrett personated *Elizabeth*, Mr. Scott, *Leicester*, and Mr. W. H. Smith, *Mortimer*. It was again announced that all proceeds were for the benefit of Mrs. Duff.

Mr. Forrest — who was now on the rising tide of popularity, and who, despite all adverse criticism, possessed elements of greatness, a freshness and vigor of style combined with a personal grandeur and magnetism, not united in any of his competitors — commenced an engagement on the 28th as *Macbeth* with Mrs. Duff as *Lady Macbeth*. On the 30th they appeared as *Damon* and *Calanthe*, on the 1st of January, 1830, as *Rolla* and *Elvira*, on the 4th as *Ludovico* and *Evadne*, and on the 6th as *William Tell* and *Emma*.

1830.

On the 24th of January Mr. Booth re-appeared in the following admirable representation of "Hamlet": —

Hamlet	Mr. Booth.
King	Mr. Scott.
Polonius	Mr. Kilner.
Laertes	Mr. W. H. Smith.
Horatio	Mr. G. Jones.
Osric	Mr. Thayer.
Gravedigger	Mr. Hyatt.
Ghost	Mr. Wilson.
Ophelia	Mrs. G. Barrett.
Queen Gertrude	Mrs. Duff.

For the first time, and to oblige Mr. Booth, Mrs. Duff consented to act the repulsive part of the *Queen*.

In this cast especially noticeable are Mrs. Barrett who, when playing *Ophelia* a few years later to Charles Kemble's *Hamlet*, was pronounced by his daughter Fanny the most perfect specimen of female loveliness she had ever looked on; and also the handsome and promising George Jones who in after life developed such conspicuous eccentricities under the style and title of George the Count Joannes.

February 1 Mrs. Duff personated *Desdemona* to the *Othello* of Forrest and the *Iago* of Booth, a combination of excellence as rare as it was superlatively fine.

For Mr. Booth's benefit on the 3d she represented *Constance* to the *Faulconbridge* of Forrest and Booth's *King John;** and, soon after, *Belvidera* to Booth's *Pierre* and Forrest's *Jaffier*.

February 15 Stone's well known tragedy of "Metamora" was produced for the first time in Boston, and met with the same success that attended its original

* The cast of "King John" at this date is one of the finest on record, viz:—

King John . . . . . Mr. Booth.	Essex . . . . . Mr. Leman.
Faulconbridge . . . Mr. Forrest.	James Gurney . . Mr. Clements.
King Philip . . . . . Mr. Scott.	Citizen of Angiers . . Mr. Hyatt.
Lewis the Dauphin . . Mr. Thayer.	Heralds . . . { Mr. J. S. Jones. Mr. Eberle.
Hubert . . . . Mr. W. H. Smith.	
Salisbury . . . . . Mr. Comer.	Prince Henry . . Miss McBride.
Pembroke . . . . Mr. B. Blaike.	Prince Arthur . . Mrs. G. Barrett.
Archduke of Austria Mr. G. Jones.	Lady Constance . . . Mrs. Duff.
Robert Faulconbridge . Mr. Whiting.	Queen Elinor . . Mrs. W. Jones.
Cardinal Pandulph . Mr. W. Jones.	Lady Faulconbridge Mrs. Campbell.
Chatillon . . . Mr. Collingbourne.	Blanch of Castile Mrs. Papanti.

production in New York. Both casts are well worth preserving.

	Park Theatre, New York, 1829.	Tremont Theatre, Boston, 1830.
Metamora	Mr. Forrest.	Mr. Forrest.
Lord Fitzarnold . .	Mr. Richings.	Mr. Scott.
Sir Arthur Vaughan .	Mr. Chapman.	Mr. W. Jones.
Guy of Godalmin . .	Mr. Woodhull.	Mr. Wilson.
Horatio	Mr. Barry.	Mr. W. H. Smith.
Errington	Mr. Langton.	Mr. Comer.
Church	Mr. T. Placide.	Mr. G. Jones.
Wolfe	Mr. Nexsen.	Mr. B. Blaike.
Tramp	Mr. Povey.	Mr. J. S. Jones.
Holyoke	Mr. Wheatley.	Mr. Leman.
Goodenough	Mr. ———.	Mr. Eberle.
Kanshine	Mr. Blakely.	Mr. Collingbourne.
Child	Miss S. Parker.	
Oceana	Mrs. Hilson.	Mrs. G. Barrett.
Nahmeokee	Mrs. Sharpe.	Mrs. Duff.

Mrs. Duff's performance was highly praised for its pathos and truth to nature, and was pronounced a noble counterpart to Forrest's *Metamora*, whose admirable portraiture of Aboriginal character gave an unwaning popularity to the tragedy for more than thirty years.

On the 10th of March Mrs. Duff for the first time played in Mrs. Inchbald's comedy of "Every One Has His Fault" as the discarded daughter and wretched wife and mother, *Lady Elinor Irwin*, whose sufferings in her hands excited the profoundest sympathy.

On the 24th she personated *Queen Elizabeth* to Mr. Hackett's wonderful imitation of Kean as *Richard III.* Mr. Hackett was a born comedian. He achieved great success in various departments of humor and was for years the only acknowledged representative of

Falstaff, who seems to have died with him; yet he had a perpetual hankering after the honors of tragedy and, as lately as 1840, during an engagement at the Park Theatre, New York, played *Lear* three times and *Hamlet* once or twice, more to the satisfaction of himself however than of the public.

In April Mrs. Duff undertook two entirely new characters: *Rosine* in the celebrated Fanny Wright's tragedy of "Altorf;" and soon after that of *Amabel* in Miss Mitford's "Julian," but neither added to her fame; nor has either play, wherever performed, had more than a transient success. For her benefit, she brought out Scott's "House of Aspen," in which she personated *Isabella* with such success that several repetitions were demanded before the close of the season.

A trip to Baltimore followed, where on the 3d of May she opened as *Jane Shore*. On the 10th she appeared for the first time as *Lucy Ashton* in "The Bride of Lammermoor," and in her long neglected character of the *Countess of Lovelaugh* in the comedy of "Rochester."

During this engagement she played a large number of her favorite characters, with the strong support of Messrs. Cooper, Forrest, Hamblin, Archer, Walton, Mrs. Hamblin (the first), Mrs. Maywood, and others. For the first time she also personated *Rebecca* in "Ivanhoe."

On the 9th of June Mrs. Duff commenced an engagement at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in the character of *Adelgitha*, — taking her benefit on the 14th in "The Bohemian Mother" and in part of

"The Merchant of Venice." Mr. Duff, who for a long time has been lost sight of, appeared in the afterpiece as *Looney McTwolter*. The engagement was renewed for a few nights and terminated with another benefit on the 23d, when she played *Cordelia* with the aid of Mr. Booth as *King Lear*. Her husband also appeared as *Teague* in "The Honest Thieves."

It was probably of this performance that the amiable and accurate Mrs. Trollope, in her "Domestic Manners of the Americans," wrote that she went to see Mr. Booth, formerly of Drury Lane, in the character of *Lear* and a Mrs. Duff in *Cordelia*, but that she had seen too many *Lears* and *Cordelias* to be easily pleased, and thought the whole performance very bad.

Returning to Boston Mrs. Duff closed the season by appearing as *Mrs. Haller*, *Imogine*, and *Isabella* in "The House of Aspen," the last on the 1st of July. During the preceding nine months she had played more than one hundred times, or an average of every alternate play-night.

In the autumn of 1830 a new theatre was erected in Baltimore for Messrs. Booth and Duff, to which the proprietors gave the name of the Adelphi, but which, in consequence of its poor location, soon gained the unenviable title of the Mud Theatre. Here Mr. and Mrs. Duff appeared on the 4th of October in the tragedy of "Isabella." The house was scarcely ready however for an audience, and on the 6th inst. the company, which was a strong one, presented at the Holliday Street Theatre the tragedy of "The Distrest Mother" with Booth, Porter, Mrs. Duff, and Mrs. Hughes in the leading parts.

At the Adelphi on the 28th of October Mrs. Duff played *Portia* to the *Shylock* of Mr. Charles Kean; and on another evening she enacted the *Queen Mother* to his *Hamlet*, in the extraordinary cast of that tragedy when Mr. Booth played the *Second Actor* (!) Mr. Warren *Polonius*, Mr. Archer *Laertes*, Mr. Duff the *Ghost*, Mr. John Sefton *Osric*, Mr. Flynn the *Gravedigger*, and Mrs. Flynn *Ophelia*.

It was perhaps for Charles Kean's benefit that Mr. Booth voluntarily assumed this trifling part, for the purpose of attracting a large house by its startling absurdity, and for the enactment of which he was honored with round upon round of enthusiastic applause. Kean, a youthful star at this time, possessed little brilliancy of his own, and had played his engagements in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore to receipts averaging less than the nightly expenses of the theatre.

The entire month of November was passed by Mrs. Duff at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, where on the 18th she added the character of *Zorayda* in "The East Indian" to her repertory. She received two benefits during this period, at one of which she appeared in "The Gamester" and "The Maid and Magpie" with Mr. Cooper as *Beverley;* and at the other, November 29, as *Florinda* in "The Apostate," when her husband played *Malec*, — probably his last appearance on any stage.

1831.

On December 31, 1830, was announced Mrs. Duff's first appearance at the theatre in Charleston, S. C., then

managed by Mr. Faulkner, her initial character being *Isabella*. She continued there until the latter part of March, 1831, occasionally supported by Mr. Forrest, occasionally by Mr. Cooper, and on one occasion in "The Distrest Mother" by Frederick Brown, formerly of Boston. It is worthy of notice that in the company at the time was George H. Hill, afterwards known under the popular name of Yankee Hill, who played anything, from the *Sentinel* in "Pizarro" and *Catesby* in "Jane Shore" down to the ruffian *Pedro* in "Isabella," — or any subordinate part in which he might be cast.

Mrs. Duff on the 9th of April reappeared at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in the character of *Adelgitha* — the scholarly Mr. Barton, afterwards the friend and adviser of Miss Cushman, playing *Guiscard* and Mr. Wood *Michael Ducas*.

Augustus Addams, then in his youthful prime and giving promise of a prosperous career as a tragedian, here brought out the tragedy of "Miantonimoh, or the Wept of Wish-ton-wish," which had already been successfully played in New York. Addams of course represented the hero *Conanchet* and Mrs. Duff made a deep impression as the pale-faced Indian maiden *Narramattah*.

Mrs. Duff was progressing successfully with her engagement when the dangerous condition of her husband's health caused her retirement. His death occurred on the 28th of April, 1831, at the age of forty-four. Mr. Wood says of him that he always maintained a high reputation with the audience of Philadelphia. He was long an esteemed member of the company,

greatly respected for his gentle and unassuming manners and his excellent conduct in his domestic relations. Duff was conspicuous for his gravity and reserve in private life, while in public he seemed all vivacity and spirit.

A benefit was given to Mrs. Duff on the 14th of May, although she took no part in the performances, which consisted of the romance of "The Ethiop" and the farce of "Love Laughs at Locksmiths." Mr. and Mrs. Wood, Messrs. John Woodhull, Darley, Porter, H. Eberle, W. B. Chapman, J. Mills Brown, and Charles Green, with Mrs. C. Durang, Miss Hamilton, and Miss Caroline Chapman were in the casts. The last, a very talented young lady so highly appreciated at Burton's Chambers Street Theatre a few years later, and who now played as Miss Greenwood, enacted *Zoe* in the play and *Lydia* in the farce.

The necessities of her family however required an early resumption of Mrs. Duff's duties, and on the 24th of May she reappeared in Chestnut Street as *Mrs. Haller* to the *Stranger* of Mr. A. Addams, terminating her engagement on the 30th as *Florinda*.

On the 7th of June she made her first appearance for the season at the Tremont Theatre, Boston, as *Mrs. Haller*, following it with *Elvira*, *Mrs. Beverley*, *Amelia St. Germain* in Dunlap's "Fate of a Gamester" (first time), *Evadne*, *Mathilde*, and *Immalee* (first time) in "Melmoth the Wanderer."

Mrs. Duff next fulfilled a fortnight's engagement in New York, and made her first appearance for four years at the Bowery Theatre on the 22d of June. She

played *Jane Shore*, supported by Mr. Booth as *Gloster*, Mr. Cooper as *Hastings*, Mr. Hamblin as *Dumont*, and Mrs. Stone as *Alicia*, — a cast of unprecedented excellence. Her second appearance was on the 24th as *Lady Randolph*, with Hamblin as *Young Norval*, Booth as *Old Norval*, and Cooper as *Glenalvon*. At the bottom of the bill was the announcement that "the tragedy of 'Jane Shore' having been received by a crowded and brilliant audience with the most thrilling and rapturous applause, Mrs. Duff will make her third appearance these four years on Saturday next in that character, supported by the powerful talents of Messrs. Cooper, Booth, and Hamblin." The *Mirror* spoke of her performance of this part (which she repeated three times) as evincing even more than her usual power and producing an intense impression on her audience. She took her benefit on the 6th of July as *Lady Constance* and *Mathilde*, Booth personating *King John*, Hamblin *Faulconbridge*, Scott *Hubert*, and pretty Miss Pelby the persecuted *Prince Arthur*.

The next engagement of Mrs. Duff was at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, where she opened as *Jane Shore* on the 13th of July. She here again had the brilliant co-operation of Messrs. Booth, Cooper, Hamblin, Barton, Rowbotham, Wemyss, Mrs. Maywood, Mrs. Rowbotham, Miss Riddle, and others. The bill of this performance is given on the following page.

For her benefit on the 27th she appeared in her still favorite character of *Juliet*, Mr. Barton playing *Romeo*, and Mr. Hamblin *Mercutio*, each for the first time in America. Her engagement and her labors for the

Theatre.

WALNUT STREET.

POWERFUL ATTRACTION!

Grand Concentration of *TALENT.*

The Managers of this Establishment, anxious to gratify their patrons and the lovers of the Drama, have spared neither pains nor expense to render the Theatre worthy of public patronage, and in addition to the Brilliant names of

COOPER,

BOOTH,

AND

BARTON,

They have added that favourite Actress,

MRS. DUFF,

Who will appear this Evening in the Character of

JANE SHORE.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, July 13, 1831.

Will be presented Rowe's celebrated Tragedy of

JANE SHORE.

Richard, Duke of Gloster	Mr. BOOTH.
Lord Hastings	Mr. COOPER.
Dumont	Mr. BARTON.
Jane Shore	Mrs. DUFF.
Alicia	Mrs. MAYWOOD.

After which, [2*d time*] *the laughable Farce of*

Past 10 o'clock.

TO-MORROW EVENING,

Mr. J. R. Smith's Benefit.

season ended on the 30th of July, when for the benefit of Mr. Maywood she appeared as *Lady Macbeth* and *Elvira* in selections from "Macbeth" and "Pizarro."

The fall season of 1831 was opened by Mrs. Duff at the Arch Street Theatre, Philadelphia, September 14, in the character of *Jane Shore*, with the celebrated Mrs. Drake — the so-called "Queen of the West" — as *Alicia*. Messrs. Cooper, Archer, and John R. Scott, a young and popular actor of the Forrest school, were also in the cast. The combination of Mrs. Drake with Mrs. Duff in the same play attracted much attention and afforded a long wished for opportunity of comparing their very different yet powerfully exciting styles of acting.

To Mrs. Drake's passionate *Roxana*, Mrs. Duff portrayed the tender gentleness of *Statira;* to her dashing worldliness as the fashionable *Miss Dorillon*, Mrs. Duff exhibited the retiring modesty and conjugal submissiveness of the amiable *Lady Priory;* while to her fiery *Emilia*, Mrs. Duff's touching sweetness and resigned endurance of undeserved suffering as *Desdemona* proved a most affecting and harmonious contrast.

On one occasion at this period Mrs. Duff played *Lady Randolph* to the *Young Norval* of the child-actress Alexina Fisher, afterwards the idol of the Philadelphia stage, and now the esteemed and popular Mrs. Baker.

On the 5th of October she was complimented with a house of eight hundred and fifty dollars for her benefit (admission to boxes seventy-five cents, to pit thirty-

seven and one-half cents), playing *Eugenia* in "The Foundling of the Forest," and introducing to the stage her eldest daughter Mary as *Ernestine* in "The Somnambulist" with entire success. Young, beautiful, and highly accomplished, Mary Duff afterwards became Mrs. A. Addams and, later, Mrs. J. G. Porter; but few could have anticipated at this period the ultimate unhappiness of her later years.

Edmund Beauchamp, the hero of "The Somnambulist," was personated by James E. Murdoch, the gentleman and scholar, who was then gaining fame in a line of youthful parts, and who has since been highly esteemed as a genteel comedian and elocutionist.*

Mrs. Duff next fulfilled a brief engagement at Baltimore, adding there one new character to her list — that of *Elspat McTavish* in a drama founded on Scott's "Highland Widow." For her benefit she played *Lady Elinor Irwin*, her daughter appearing in "The Somnambulist," and as in Philadelphia she was honored with a crowded house.

She was then secured by Richard Russell for the new Richmond Hill Theatre, New York, where she made her first appearance on the 15th of November, 1831, in the part of *Belvidera*. Her engagement was one continued triumph. She played her old characters with renewed success, and added several new ones to her list, in which she won unbounded approbation.

* Mr. Murdoch, in his recently published work on the stage, alludes to Mrs. Duff as the most excellent tragic actress of the Old School in America, as a woman of great amiability of disposition and exceedingly nervous temperament.

The daily press was loud in her praise, and frequent astonishment was expressed that her talents should be confined to so small a stage. Extracts from various newspaper articles are herewith given : —

" Last evening Mrs. Duff made her first appearance. Of this lady, the first in her line in this country, too much cannot be said either of her professional or private merit."

" Mrs. Duff and Mr. Cooper performed *Beverley* and *Mrs. Beverley* in " The Gamester " with a spirit and effect equal if not superior to any similar performance in this country. *He* seems to improve with age ; *she* needs no improvement."

" Mrs. Duff, at the Richmond Hill, brings white heads — and wise ones too — to enjoy her striking and powerful playing."

On the occasion of her benefit, December 15, she appeared in " The Bohemian Mother " and for the seventh time as *Rose Redland* in the new domestic drama of " The Robber's Wife," a part in which Miss Ellen Tree was eminently successful in London. Calling attention to this event the *Courier and Enquirer* remarked : " Mrs. Duff takes her benefit this evening at Richmond Hill. It is a general remark of those who have had the pleasure of witnessing her performances that it is to them a matter of great surprise why the first female tragedian of this country should not have the doors of the principal theatres open to her under advantageous engagements. We do not pretend to account for such anomalies." Again : " We have seldom if ever beheld a lady capable of arousing and

touching the feelings like Mrs. Duff. With a noble person for the stage, and a face full of soul, she addresses herself to the hearts of her hearers in a voice which for plaintive tenderness and thrilling expression we have never known equalled."

In the latter part of December Mrs. Duff had a brief leave of absence, which she employed in running through a short engagement in Arch Street, Philadelphia.

1832.

She returned to New York in January, 1832, making her re-entree at Richmond Hill on the 2d of the month in her highly popular part of *Rose Redland*. The critics again sounded forth her praises in terms like the following: —

"Richmond Hill really deserves a warm patronage. Mrs. Duff shines forth there as she would shine anywhere."

"Mrs. Duff has no superior on the American stage. Her representations are full of the most touching tenderness and pathos."

"Mrs. Duff has filled the house whenever she performed."

"Mrs. Duff is at the head of her profession."

"The talented Mrs. Duff takes a benefit this evening at the Richmond Hill. During her short re-engagement she has confirmed the impression of the audience that she has no superior in this country."

The benefit alluded to took place on the 30th of January, and Mrs. Duff appeared as *Adelgitha*, and as *Mary* in the new and popular nautical drama of "Will Watch."

On the 1st of February the bills of Richmond Hill Theatre bore the following heading : —

" Re-engagement of Mrs. Duff ! ! R. Russell begs most respectfully to announce to his patrons that on Monday evening a general call was made by the audience for a re-engagement with this talented actress. Having succeeded in doing so, Mrs. Duff will have the honor of making her appearance this evening as *Elvira*."

On the 4th of February she appeared as *Lady Macbeth*, supported by Alexander Wilson as the guilty thane. It was this performance that is referred to by Horace Greeley in his " Recollections of a Busy Life," in the following passage : " At Richmond Hill I saw Mrs. Duff personate *Lady Macbeth* better than it has since been done in this city, though she played for thirty dollars per week and others have since received ten times that amount for a single night. I doubt that any woman has since played in our city — and I am thinking of Fanny Kemble — who was the superior of Mrs. Duff in a wide range of tragic characters."

Mrs. Duff appears to have been the only actress who made a lasting impression on the mind of Horace Greeley. When editor of the *New Yorker*, about 1836 or 1837, he recurred to the fact of her recent prolonged absence from New York, and said that he should not cease alluding to the subject till she was again installed upon our stage, — adding that it was a disgrace to the dramatic taste of the city that her appearance had not been called for in terms too decided to be misunderstood.

Mrs. Duff's engagement terminated on the 8th of February, but she was found to be so attractive that Mr. Russell announced on the 12th that he had induced her to relinquish her southern tour and that she was re-engaged for the balance of the season.

Although she was the undisputed representative of the loftiest characters on our stage, her appearance in minor dramas was found more profitable to the theatre; and therefore, in addition to parts already mentioned, she was brought forward as *Mary the Innkeeper's Daughter*, *Lissette the Sergeant's Wife*, *Ella Rosenberg*, *Innogen* in "Adelmorn the Outlaw," *Zelinda* in "The Slave," and *Victorine* in the new drama of that name, — in which she met with the highest popular success and warmest critical approval. She took her final benefit for the season on the 9th of April, when she appeared as *Lyieushee Lovell, the Gypsy of Ashburnham Glen*, her daughter Mary making her first appearance in New York as *Helen Worrett* in "Man and Wife" and *Louisa* in "The Dead Shot."

Of Miss Mary Duff the *Philadelphia Album* had lately given this description: "With all the elegance, dignity, and purity that characterize the style of her mother's acting, she combines exquisite beauty and grace of carriage. Her voice has much of the melody and pathos of her mother's and in the low and soft tones is peculiarly and touchingly sweet and melting. Her readings are correct and spirited and won her much and merited applause. When time and practice have added fullness and force to her voice and domesticated her more completely to the stage, this charming

young lady will be found perfectly worthy to wear the mantle of her accomplished mother."

Mrs. Duff next journeyed to Boston, where she reappeared at the Tremont Theatre in conjunction with Mr. Forrest, on the 1st of May, in the tragedy of "Macbeth." During their engagement, to his *Metamora*, *Spartacus*, *Pierre*, *Othello*, and *Carwin* she appeared as *Nahmeokee*, *Senona*, *Belvidera*, *Emilia* (first time), and *Therese*, and on her benefit night as *Elvira* to his *Rolla* and her daughter's *Cora*, this being the latter's first appearance in Boston. A very large and fashionable audience collected on this occasion to give a token of respect to an old favorite, and to welcome the daughter to the stage that had so long been worthily graced by the mother.

Mrs. Duff's engagement was renewed, but here as in New York, at so late a period in the season, her most attractive performances were in "The Bohemian Mother," "The Robber's Wife," "The Foundling of the Forest," and a new drama entitled "The Cradle of Liberty," from Cooper's "Lionel Lincoln," in which she represented the character of *Crazy Nab*. The Boston critics were as earnest and as forcible in her praise as they had ever been. She was still pronounced without a rival in the country, and her perfect enunciation, propriety of action, and simple dignity of manner were recommended to the ladies of the city, as standards of excellence worthy of their closest study.

During the preceding nine months Mrs. Duff's name is found attached to one hundred and thirty-eight

characters, the most frequent single performance being that of *Rose Redland*, which she personated fourteen times. *Victorine* was the next in number, having had eleven representations. *Belvidera*, *Mathilde*, and *Mary* in "Will Watch" were each given seven times; *Mrs. Haller*, *Eugenia*, and *Lissette* in "The Sergeant's Wife," each six times; and numerous others, five representations or less.

Where is the actress now who would submit to such onerous requirements or be able to endure such an immense amount of laborious study?

Up to this period Mrs. Duff had had no rival in the tragic line, but a new and brilliant star was soon to appear in the theatrical firmament which threatened to eclipse all other contemporary orbs on the eastern borders of our hemisphere; and the advent of Fanny Kemble, with her youth, beauty, talent, and foreign prestige, left small room for older lights to revolve in. Very wisely therefore Mrs. Duff enlisted under the banner of Messrs. Caldwell and Russell for a campaign in the western and southern sections of our country. She made her first appearance in Cincinnati, October 3, 1832, in the character of *Adelgitha*, and played a round of her most popular parts, terminating on the 15th in "The Bohemian Mother."

Her principal support here was from Messrs. Caldwell, Scott, James Thorne, Russell, Field (father of the distinguished Miss Kate Field of to-day), Gray, Muzzy, Houpt, Mrs. Russell, Mrs. Muzzy, Miss Jane Placide, Mrs. Rowe, Miss Petrie, and Mrs. Higgins, — some of them well known in our eastern cities, and all of them highly popular in the West.

Her engagement ended, Mrs. Duff travelled with the company towards New Orleans. Either on this or a subsequent voyage down the Mississippi the Asiatic cholera broke out among the passengers on the steamer with the most fatal results, and here the beauty and sympathetic tenderness of her character shone out with a lustre that gave her more true glory than all her triumphs of art upon the mimic stage.

Fearless for herself she ministered to the sick and dying with all the devotion of a woman's nature, and whispered words of comfort and Christian hope to many a sinking wretch who before had found few to pity him and none to save. On her arrival at New Orleans the survivors tendered her a vote of thanks, couched in the most eulogistic terms, which was published in all the papers of the day.

1833.

She made her first appearance in New Orleans on the 27th of November, 1832, in her wonderful performance of *Isabella*, and continued to play at intervals until the middle of March, 1833, but was required to study no new part during her engagement. Mr. Barton was her most efficient support as the heroes of her plays, and with his aid she enacted *Mrs. Haller*, *Mrs. Beverley*, *Lady Macbeth*, *Cordelia*, and *Elvira*.

With the spring Mrs. Duff turned her face northward, but no record of her movements has been found until late in June, when she was announced to appear at the Richmond Hill Theatre, New York, then under the direction of Moses S. Phillips. Her engagement

there must have been almost profitless. Theatrical business, always dull at that season of the year, was unusually so in the summer of 1833, for the play-attending public had been over-fed and over-excited during the preceding season at the Park and Bowery by the constant attractions of the Kembles, Forrest, Cooper, Booth, Hamblin, Charles Kean, Horn, "Yankee" Hill, Mrs. Austin, Miss Hughes, Clara Fisher, Master Burke, Miss Clifton, Miss Vincent, Madame Pedrotti, Fornasari, and the Daponte opera troupe, and now required a period of repose. Although Mrs. Duff was sustained by a company in which were found the favorite names of Mr. and Mrs. Hilson, Mr. and Mrs. Flynn, Frederick Brown, Charles Young, and other respectable performers, her claims were unheeded and she played her engagement to wretchedly sparse audiences, taking her farewell benefit on the 18th of July in the character of *Katherine the Shrew*.

Disappointed and disheartened with the result of her year's labors, embarrassed in her pecuniary affairs, involved in debt by the extravagance of her family, and painfully affected by the recklessness of some of its members, Mrs. Duff had now fallen into a state of despondency verging on insanity.

It was while she was in this melancholy condition that her friends were astounded by the report of her marriage to Mr. Young, then of the Richmond Hill company, and previously well known in all the leading theatres of the country. It appeared that Mr. Young, while escorting her from rehearsal one morning, suggested marriage to her, which, after naming certain

stipulations and reservations, she accepted ; and having invited Mr. and Mrs. Hilson to accompany them as witnesses, the parties went through the nuptial ceremony according to the ritual both of the Catholic and Episcopal churches. The peculiarity of the affair was that Mrs. Duff immediately disavowed and repudiated the act, never in any way acknowledged Mr. Young as a husband, and the marriage was soon after legally dissolved. In her petition for its annulment she asserted that she was persuaded to take this step while in a temporary alienation of mind produced by opium taken during a season of illness and severe domestic sorrow.

Many reasons have been assigned for this most singular marriage, but the following, furnished by her friend Mrs. Charles Durang, is probably the true one : " Mrs. Duff was overwhelmed with debts accumulated by the extravagance of her family. In an unfortunate moment Charles Young beheld her distraction and offered his hand to her to aid her, representing that he had just fallen heir to a large property in England, which he would settle on her children if she would accept him. Maternal affection prevailed, conditions were agreed to, and the ceremony was twice performed. Scarce were the ceremonies over when he confessed the imposition he had practised, that he was not worth a cent, and that the proviso she had made, — *not to live with him for three years* — was a simple nullity. Her brain could bear no more ; reason gave way, — when Mrs. Ewing went on to New York and brought her to Frankford, Pennsylvania, where she continued to reside till her mind was sufficiently restored for her to resume her profession."

That illness and domestic trouble, combined with professional misfortunes, caused a temporary insanity there can be no doubt, and to the kind attentions of her friends in Frankford she was indebted for her restoration to the stage and to society.

1834.

On resuming her labors she is first found at the Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, where she opened as *Adelgitha*, on the 13th of January, 1834. During this engagement she twice played *Lucy Ashton* in "The Bride of Lammermoor," and on her benefit night appeared as *Elvira* to Mr. Murdoch's first performance of *Rolla*.

After an engagement at Baltimore she was announced at the Pittsburg Theatre, where she played a number of her prominent parts with Messrs. A. Addams, Oxley, Wemyss, the Sefton brothers, etc. in the cast. On one occasion she personated *Nahmeokee* to Mr. Forrest's *Metamora*, her name being in larger letters on the bill than that of the eminent actor she supported. She took her benefit on the 3d of March as *Jane Shore* and *Rose Redland*, but played two additional nights, — on one as *Elvira* and the other as *Mathilde*.

The remainder of the month of March she played in Baltimore, but probably with little pecuniary profit, judging from the following pitiful letter written from there to Mrs. Durang in Philadelphia.

"Dear Madam, — I trust you will pardon my again troubling you, but Matilda in her last letter again forgot to mention her place of abode. I addressed a

letter to her last week which is not answered; I suppose it yet lies in the office. Mr. Isherwood run off this morning in every one's debt. I wish to return home when it may please my children to let me know where that home is.

"Give my love to your mother. I hope you and the children are all well. That they may bring you comfort is the fervent wish of

Your friend, MARY ANN DUFF.

"There is a YOUNG person here who has had the impudence to sit in the front of the house and look at me. M. A. D.

"Excuse this wretched scrawl as I am both ill and troubled. I shall be with Wemyss next winter."

The "young person" alluded to in her note was doubtless her *soi-disant* husband, whom ordinary delicacy one would suppose might have kept from obtruding himself sō conspicuously upon her.

In April she had a brief engagement at Washington, D. C., and in July played several nights with her daughter in Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

The fall season of 1834 commenced in Baltimore where Mrs. Duff had many ardent friends. The conclusion of her engagement there was honored with a complimentary testimonial on the 8th of December, tendered by eminent residents of the city, and the performances were sustained by the voluntary aid of the companies both of the Front Street and Holliday Street theatres. On this occasion Mrs. Duff appeared in her two most popular characters, *Madame Clermont* and

Mathilde, and delivered a poetical address written for her by J. H. Hewitt, Esq. of Baltimore.

In December she commenced an engagement with Mr. Wemyss in the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, playing, on the 29th of the month, *Tullia* to the *Brutus* of Mr. J. H. Oxley, one of the numerous meteoric lights then glittering in the theatrical firmament, whose attractive brilliancy was soon doomed to be dimmed forever.

1835.

On the 2d of January, 1835, she played *Mrs. Haller* to his *Stranger*, and on the 9th gave her charming personation of *Calanthe* to the *Damon* of Mr. A. Addams and the *Pythias* of Mr. Edmon S. Conner, who then made his first appearance in his native city where he long continued to be greatly liked. The company at this theatre, if not entirely of the highest order of merit, was an exceedingly popular one, comprising among its members many notable favorites with the audience, — Oxley, Conner, the Seftons (William and John), Mr. and Mrs. Charles Thorne, Mr. and Mrs. W. Kent (the ladies remarkable for personal beauty), Mrs. Frederick Brown, J. Mills Brown, Wemyss, W. Jones, J. G. Porter, A. W. Jackson, Mestayer, Thayer, Alexina Fisher, Mrs. Duff and Miss Mary Duff, with the celebrated William Barrymore as stage manager. Mr. Booth frequently appeared here as a star, as did Augustus Addams, who now stood at the summit of his fame; and when Mrs. Duff gave them her support her name was still announced in capitals as large as theirs. Her beauty of face may have some-

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Mary A. Duff

what faded, but her dignity of person and skill in her art had not in the least declined. She was still admired and applauded, and was in every way worthy of being the leading tragedienne of any theatre. In February and early in March she played *Queen Elizabeth* (three times), *Florinda*, *Mrs. Haller*, and *Queen Gertrude*, to Booth's *Richard*, *Pescara*, *Stranger*, and *Hamlet*. March 9 she performed *Lady Macbeth* to A. Addams's *Macbeth* for her benefit, which yielded her one hundred and fifty-one dollars, her salary being probably still only thirty dollars per week. Booth and Addams combined on the 17th, 18th, and 19th, when she appeared in succession as *Belvidera*, *Portia*, and *Constance* to the former's *Jaffier*, *Cassius*, and *King John* and the latter's *Pierre*, *Brutus*, and *Faulconbridge*. She also played *Florinda* to Booth's *Pescara* on the 20th, and *Queen Elizabeth* to his *Richard* on the 21st, his remuneration for the last five nights being five hundred dollars without taking a benefit.

On the occasion of Miss Mary Duff's benefit, April 4, Mrs. Duff for the first and only time appeared as the amiable *Mrs. Bromley* to her daughter's *Mrs. Simpson* in the popular farce of "Simpson and Co."

On April 13 she was again in Baltimore, commencing with *Adelgitha* and, towards the close of the month, playing for the first time *Elizabeth* in "The Golden Farmer" to De Camp's *Harry Hammer* and Hadaway's *Jemmy Twitcher*. Returning to Philadelphia Mrs. Duff made her last appearance on the Chestnut Street boards, June 5, for the benefit of Mrs. W. Jones in the character of *Eugenia* in "The Foundling of the

Forest." She also played for Mr. Philip Warren's benefit in Walnut Street, June 23, as *Emilia* to her daughter's *Desdemona*, Addams's *Othello*, Wood's *Iago*, and Conner's *Cassio*.

The autumn of 1835 found her engaged to Mr. Dinneford of the new little Franklin Theatre, Chatham Square, New York, where she made her first appearance as *Mrs. Haller* on the 8th of September.

Her performances were commenced under the happiest of auspices and never during her entire career had she achieved a higher artistic success. The house was nightly filled to overflowing, and though not the resort of fashion, it regularly found many of the most intellectual and cultivated of New York's citizens within its walls. All were spellbound as of old. Her soul-subduing voice still melted the hearts of the sternest listeners, and caused the tears of sympathy to moisten many a man's unwilling cheek. Sorrow, sickness, and disappointment had not quelled the fire of genius; and in queenliness of carriage, grace of action, purity and force of declamation, sweetness and naturalness of colloquial discourse, the withering glance of scorn, the crushing tone of indignation, the appeal of tenderness, and in every varying emotion of the soul she was still the pathetic, powerful, brilliant, and impassioned actress whose magnetic quality aroused the enthusiasm of her audiences and sustained their interest in her characters unflagging to the end.

Mrs. Duff followed her first performance with *Florinda*, *Isabella*, *Adelgitha*, *Calanthe*, *Lady Randolph* (to the *Young Norval* of Mrs. Hamblin), *Lady Priory*

(to Mr. and Mrs. Blake's *Bronzely* and *Miss Dorillon*), *Mrs. Beverley* (to Blake's *Gamester*), and *Elizabeth* in "The Golden Farmer."

All were perfect specimens of art; but her most glorious triumph was in *Isabella*, which she repeated four times, and in which it would seem impossible that she could ever have been excelled.

In "The Golden Farmer," first performed here October 5, she had the support of William Sefton as the *Farmer*, John Sefton as *Jemmy Twitcher* (an inimitable creation), and of little Mary Gannon as the child *Louisa*, — the last to become at Wallack's Theatre in after times the most favorite comic actress of her day.

Mrs. Duff took her benefit on the 23d of October in *Isabella*, and, obtaining a brief leave of absence, went to Philadelphia, where, at Walnut Street on the 26th, she opened in the same favorite character. She played *Mrs. Beverley* on the 27th, *Jane Shore* on the 28th, and for her benefit on the 29th (which was her last appearance on the Philadelphia stage) *Adelgitha* and *Rose Redland*, — Mr. Conner being her support as *Biron*, *Beverley*, *Hastings* and *Mark Redland*. The *Philadelphia Gazette* called attention to her benefit in the following terms: —

"Mrs. Duff. — This estimable lady and excellent actress takes a benefit at the Walnut Street Theatre to-night, at the close of a very successful engagement. In the whole range of the profession there is not an individual whose claims on public respect and sympathy have precedence to hers. To enumerate them

would be tedious and altogether unnecessary in a community where her long tried services and domestic worth are so well known and appreciated. Let her benefit be one in reality."

Mrs. Duff was back in New York on the 2d of November, when she reappeared at the Franklin in "The Golden Farmer." Her succeeding and final characters in New York were *Angela* in "The Castle Spectre;" *Lucy Fairlove* to Thayer's *Ambrose Gwinett; Calanthe*, *Imogine*, *Belvidera*, and *Desdemona* to David Ingersoll's *Damon*, *Bertram*, *Jaffier*, and *Othello;* and *Portia* to the *Shylock* of Mr. Roy, a Southern tragedian.

Mr. Ingersoll was a most prepossessing and popular young actor of the highest promise, but his abilities were rendered worthless by his unfortunate habits which finally caused his early death. His wife was the youngest daughter of the Philadelphia comedian, Jefferson.

On the 27th of November a complimentary benefit was given at the Bowery Theatre to its then most favorite comedian, William Gates. Mrs. Duff was selected to deliver the poetical address, and also sustained the character of *Mrs. Haller* in the last two acts of "The Stranger," supported by Mr. A. Addams in the title role. The receipts on this occasion amounted to sixteen hundred dollars.

On the 30th of November, for the benefit of John Sefton, Mrs. Duff made her last appearance in New York as *Elizabeth* in the nineteenth representation of "The Golden Farmer." Although the character was

an affecting one it was short, and subordinate to the comic element of the piece, which was wonderfully embodied in the *Jemmy Twitcher* of Mr. Sefton, and which proved so attractive to the patrons of the house that Mrs. Duff's services were rendered unnecessary, and the part was thereafter given to a secondary actress.

The performances of Mrs. Duff were occasionally alluded to in the papers of the day, but without any attempt at description or analysis. One, however, said that "she retained all the vigor, pathos, and energy that characterized her earlier efforts;" and another, that "she fully sustained her former reputation as an actress." On the occasion of a wreath being thrown to her on the stage The *Herald* pertinently remarked: "A fig for wreaths; send her bank leaves."

Mrs. Duff now returned to her desolated home in Philadelphia, followed by an admiring suitor to whom she soon after gave her hand. The gentleman is alluded to in the following letter to Mr. Charles Page, from whom in her distresses she had obtained a loan of money on pledge of personal property. This letter is now in possession of Mr. Toedteberg of Brooklyn, N. Y., to whom we are indebted for a copy.

"DECEMBER 10, 1835.

"MR. C. PAGE:

"SIR, — The bearer of this, Mr. Seaver, will call on you for the purpose of making an arrangement respecting my note, which by reason of unexpected ill health I cannot make it quite convenient to take up

for a little time, and must request a renewal of it for such further time as Mr. Seaver may agree with you.

"The moneys which are due me from Mr. J. Jefferson,* which you had the collection of, you will please pay over to Mr. Seaver, and his receipt shall be your voucher for the same.

"It would much please me if it would suit your convenience to purchase the pianoforte and wardrobe case which you have in your possession, and allow me what they are reasonably worth. The price of the piano was three hundred and fifty dollars, the music stool fifteen dollars, and the green cloth cover twelve dollars; the wardrobe case was sixty-five dollars, — making four hundred and forty-two dollars, original cost, and the articles are none the worse for wear.

"If you will give me up my note and allow me one hundred and fifty dollars in money you may have the above named articles and conclude the arrangement with Mr. Seaver, who is authorized to effect the sale on such terms if better cannot be had.

"I am going in a few days to play several engagements at the South, and will want all the funds I can command previous to my departure, which is the reason of my desiring the arrangement I have proposed. In any event you will be good enough to renew my note as desired, and pay over the moneys collected from the estate of Mr. Jefferson for me to

* Mr. J. Jefferson, father of the present comedian, for several seasons manager of the theatre at Washington, D. C., ultimately became bankrupt, and it was probably for her engagement there in 1834 that money was owing Mrs. Duff.

Mr. Seaver, and in a short time I will be able to remit you the money to take up my note. Your compliance with my request will much oblige

Yours, with due respect,

MARY A. DUFF."

1836,

At what precise date the marriage between Mr. Seaver and Mrs. Duff took place has not been ascertained ; nor is it known whether the engagements alluded to in the preceding letter were ever fulfilled, save one at Washington, D. C., where she gave her last performances in January, 1836, in conjunction with Mr. William Abbott from Covent Garden, then in the first flush of his American popularity, and where she took her farewell benefit on the 1st of February in the characters of *Jane Shore* and *Portia* to Mr. Abbott's *Lord Hastings* and *Shylock*. This is the last record discovered of her appearance on the eastern shore of our continent. Very shortly after this Mr. Seaver took his bride to New Orleans, which for nearly twenty years was their usual residence, and where the gentleman is said to have long enjoyed a prosperous and lucrative law practice under the name of Sevier, by which more Southern-sounding appellation he chose thereafter to be known.

The newly wedded wife is supposed to have occasionally resumed her professional efforts under her former well and widely known name ; but it has been impossible to trace her engagements through the Southern press, and the first official announcement of her

reappearance found is in the bills of the St. Louis Theatre, one of which, dated Oct. 13, 1836, bears the following heading: —

THE CELEBRATED AMERICAN TRAGIC ACTRESS,

MRS. DUFF!

The managers have great pleasure in introducing this lady (who stands at the head of the American stage) to the St. Louis public; at the same time they cannot but regret that in consequence of the detention on her journey her engagement must now be limited to three nights and a benefit.

Her characters here were *Adelgitha*, *Annette*, *Isabella*, and (for her benefit) *Mrs. Haller*.

The names of the company generally are unfamiliar to Eastern ears; but Mr. Ludlow,* one of the managers, was an admired actor of genteel and light comedy, and the other, the celebrated Sol. Smith, was beyond all competition the leading low comedian of the West. His little son Marcus, who on this occasion played the *Count's child* in "The Stranger," afterwards at Wallack's Theatre became one of New York's most prominent favorites, under the abbreviated name of Mark Smith.

* Mr. Ludlow, in his lately published "Dramatic Life," speaks of Mrs. Duff's acting as "refined and quiet yet powerful; not boisterous but forcible; graceful in action, and dignified without stiffness. Her great personal beauty, added to her talent and amiable qualities as a lady, endeared her to all hearts. In Philadelphia she and her husband were frequently spoken of as *the handsome couple*. She was undoubtedly the best tragic actress in the United States."

1837.

In April and May, 1837, Mrs. Duff was playing her celebrated characters at the American Theatre, New Orleans, her name being then found on the bills as *Isabella*, *Mrs. Haller*, *Imogine*, *Lady Macbeth*, *Portia*, *Belvidera*, *Jane Shore*, *Victorine*, and *Elizabeth*, — her principal support being from Mr. Parsons, the celebrated preacher or actor as occasion required.

On the 3d of June at the St. Charles Theatre for some especial benefit she appeared in the farce of "Frightened to Death" in the character of *Emily*, — Mrs. Shaw (afterwards Mrs. Hamblin) playing *Corinna*, and Miss Melton (sister of the late Charles M. Walcot) *Patty*, a most singular and extraordinary combination in such a piece.

1838.

No record of her subsequent appearance has been found until April 21, 1838, when, at the St. Charles Theatre, it was announced that, for the benefit of the Orphan Boys' Asylum of New Orleans, Mrs. Duff had in the kindest manner volunteered her services to perform the part of *Eugenia* in "The Foundling of the Forest."

This is generally supposed to have been her final appearance on the stage, but at the same theatre on the 30th of May she was announced as *Florinda* in "The Apostate," to the *Pescara* of Mr. H. G. Pearson, a young artist of merit, for the benefit of Mrs. Plumer, which probably was in fact her last theatrical appearance.

1839–1853.

Her public life may be said to have ended here, but only in one sense; for, although she had retired from the mimic stage, a broader field of action now opened on her view, and to its holier duties she devoted the remainder of her days. Renouncing the Catholic faith in which she had been born and educated, she entered with an earnest zeal the humbler communion of the Methodist Church. She took an active part in its Sabbath School teachings, joined the Temperance Society, and was a distributer of religious tracts as well as an earnest and eloquent supplicant in the frequent meetings for prayer. She soon became noted for her deeds of charity and mercy, for her loving, gentle spirit (which indeed she had always displayed during the proudest periods of her theatrical career), for her persuasive entreaties to the sinning, her eloquent exhortations to the repentant, and her kindly ministrations to the sick and suffering.

In the Northern States her society had been courted by the most cultivated classes; in New Orleans she was the centre of a religious circle, from whom the bounty of her hand and the comfort of her prayers were never withheld. She avoided players and playhouses, and seemingly strove to forget that she had ever been among them. Her husband, it was said, idolized her and furnished her with every facility for gratifying her generous inclinations. Whatever may have been Mr. Seaver's character, or however different from her in various points, they were for many

years, it is believed, the happiest of couples, and his only aim was to provide her with every comfort and luxury within his power. They occasionally visited the Northern and Middle States, but Mrs. Seaver's associations with the stage were broken, and her retiring habits prevented her from renewing her intercourse with her old companions and fellow-players. In her halcyon days she ever shunned, when possible, miscellaneous or general society, as may be seen from the following note from Mrs. Charles Durang of Philadelphia, relative to both Mr. and Mrs. Duff: "Mr. Duff was a polished, intelligent gentleman, and much sought for by society from which Mrs. Duff shrank. . . . . Any lady in the theatrical profession who has a young family to attend to cannot indulge in fashionable society where etiquette has to be observed, but all admired her as a model for mothers as well as a superior and enchanting actress."

This is confirmed by a communication from Mrs. Elizabeth Fisher (once the distinguished Mrs. Richardson of the old Park Theatre, and daughter of the renowned comedian of Philadelphia, the elder Jefferson) who says that beyond an annual visit to her mother she never knew of Mrs. Duff associating with any other family in Philadelphia.

In one of Mrs. Seaver's later visits to Baltimore she addressed the following letter to her son Thomas, for many years an actor in New York and elsewhere, and now practising law in Quincy, Illinois, who was then engaged at the theatre in Richmond, Virginia.

"BALTIMORE, November 13, 1850.

"MY DEAR CHILD, — The arrival of your letter this morning removed the anxiety I had felt for some days lest illness prevented your writing. I am much pleased on account of your favorable reception.

"You mention, my dear, that M—— has not been as well as you could wish. . . . . Tell her I am more than pleased that she regards me as if I were indeed her mother, and if nothing occurs to hinder the kind intention of my husband, the spring will place us in a situation where I can prove myself a mother to her.

"Believe me, my dear son, your absence is as painful to me as to yourself, but I am comforted in some trifling preparations for a little darling whom grandpapa says I will spoil; however, if he does with the expected pet as with the others, the spoiling will be quite as much his as mine. He leaves in a few days and will call to see you. He presents his affectionate regards to both. Write soon, my dear child, and be assured that your spiritual and temporal good is the fond wish and fervent prayer of

Your affectionate mother,

MARY ANN SEAVER."

Alienated as she was from the profession, it would seem that she had not lost her entire interest in it, for she here expresses her pleasure at the kind reception her son had met with from the Richmond audience.

The retiring character of Mrs. Duff's nature might perhaps be inferred from the following "Impromptu to a Wild Violet," which she wrote at New Orleans in

June, 1852. It is not presented as a specimen of poetical excellence, but as an illustration of the delicate and melancholy tenderness of her sentiments.

"Beautiful violet, child of the shade,
O that, like thee, I had been made
To dwell in some secluded glade,
And there unseen to bloom and fade.
O how I love the forest wild,
Where the wood-dove, cooing mild,
Mourns no lost nor absent child.
She, with her brood and loving mate,
Is more blest than queenly state
Ever made woman whose fond heart
Is forced from all she loves to part.
I know one doomed to bear such wound
As each succeeding year came round;
She lives, if breath gives life, *seems* cold, *is* proud,
Nor speaks her many griefs and wrongs aloud."

The personal sorrows of Mrs. Seaver were many and severe at this time. Her two elder sons and her second daughter, Eliza, (Mrs. Von Leer), had recently died, and her daughter Mary, who had made a most unfortunate marital alliance which brought great anguish to her mother's heart, soon also sunk into the grave.*

* Mrs. Duff was the mother of ten children, seven of whom, four sons and three daughters, reached maturity. Mary, the eldest (successively Mrs. A. Addams and Mrs. J. G. Porter) possessed great personal beauty, and in early life was a very spirited and charming actress. She died at Memphis, Tennessee, in 1852, at the age of forty-two.

Eliza, the second daughter, attempted the stage with very slight success. She married Mr. Isaac Von Leer and died young, leaving infant children.

James Lenville Duff, the eldest son, a remarkably handsome

In addition to her benevolent and religious occupations she sought to soothe the sadness of her soul by employing her idle hours in literary pursuits, and at her death left many manuscripts, — prayers and little poems for her children and grandchildren, numerous letters, comments on passages of Scripture, an elaborate disquisition on the Lord's Prayer, and a religious novel said to possess great interest. From numerous scraps in this collection it would seem that other troubles, real or imagined, disturbed her mind. One headed "On the Prospect of being Homeless" reads thus: —

"Grant me a hut near pastures green
Where limpid waters bless the scene,
That I my mortal thirst may slake
At morning-tide when I awake;
But let thy house, O God, be near,
That I the word of truth may hear,
And, free from earthly care and strife,
Drink the glad waters of eternal life."

During Mrs. Seaver's residence in New Orleans her old friend James Rees of Philadelphia once called

man, was in the profession principally at the West. He died unmarried at the age of thirty.

Thomas Thatcher Duff was also noted for his fine personal appearance, and at one time occupied a creditable position on the stage of the old Broadway Theatre, New York. He has been well known in different theatres of the country both as actor and manager. He left the stage several years ago, and is now practising law at Quincy, Illinois.

Her daughter Matilda and her sons John and William are not known to have ever trod the stage.

Thomas Duff is the sole survivor of his mother's children, but there are several living descendants in the second and third generations.

upon her, — a visit which he has thus described: "Mr. and Mrs. Seaver resided in a neat cottage situated on Canal Street. It was handsomely furnished, and all its surroundings bore evidence of the taste and judgment of its owners. I had a most interesting *tête-à-tête* with the distinguished lady. She had become religious, was a member of the Methodist Church, and the evening previous to our interview had exhorted at one of its class meetings. A spirit of holy calm rested upon her features; a smile as if from heaven, rather than of earthly growth, lit them up with a sort of supernatural glow. As we gazed upon them we thought of the time when they were worked up by the frenzied passions of the characters of her once glorious art, when as *Isabella* or *Lady Macbeth* she drew down rounds of applause from her excited audiences, making the walls of "Old Drury" * shake to their very centre. She now sat in her soft cushioned chair, not in the robes which at one time made her look every inch a queen, but in the simple garb of a lady, one no longer of the world, worldly, but with the calm quiet dignity of a follower of Jesus, conscious of her usefulness here and of its reward in the great future. . . . In our conversation we alluded to William B. Wood, and the theatres of the period in which Mrs. Duff was the ruling star. Closely we watched her countenance. Her eyes brightened, and the soul which had long lain dormant and at peace seemed for a moment aroused. The actress was herself again, and the scenes of the past, her days

* The Park Theatre, New York, and the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, were each known as "Old Drury."

of triumph, were all gone over, but more like the recital of a dream than the relation of a once mighty reality. It was however but a flash of the former glow of genius. ''T is past now' she said; 'that was my worldly life: the present, and I hope the future, my heavenly life!'"

1854-1857.

Mr. and Mrs. Seaver continued to live in New Orleans until the shadow of a heavy cloud settled over their mutual happiness, and until his political opinions rendered him unpopular there. In 1854 they left the city ostensibly for Texas.

Whether they ever reached the land of the Lone Star or, if so, how long they remained there, has never been disclosed, but for twenty years thereafter no trace of Mrs. Seaver's existence and no certainty of her decease could be discovered by her old friends. At length, in response to numerous and closely pressed inquiries, it transpired that not long after her departure from New Orleans she had arrived in New York in declining health and taken up her abode in the house of her youngest daughter, Madame Reillieux. There she was only known as an earnest Christian who devoted her life to acts of charity and goodness; and the brilliant company often assembled little dreamed that the calm and quiet lady in a sober-colored silken gown and a simple cambric cap, whom they sometimes met, was the former fascinating actress whose wonderful art-witchery could once control the feelings and command the enthusiastic plaudits of every audience.

Mrs. Seaver was here soon called to mourn the loss

of this favorite and last surviving daughter, and, after long and acute suffering from an internal cancer, was herself seized with a hemorrhage which resulted in her death on the 5th of September, 1857, in the sixty-third year of her age.

From that time until 1874 her grave was unknown to the world and to all her living colaborers of the stage. The secret of her life and death was so well kept that even her nearest relatives, residing out of New York, were unable to name the time or place of her decease. Interred with her beloved daughter in a single nameless grave in Greenwood, none imagined, as they came upon it, that the greatest and grandest actress of her day was sleeping beneath that lowly humble stone bearing the simple inscription MOTHER AND GRANDMOTHER !

"'T is not in mortals to command success," but Mrs. Duff did more, — she well deserved it and, in an artistic if not in a pecuniary sense, fully achieved it. Her supremacy of intellectual ability and wealth of personal endowments, her clear conception of character and extraordinary executive facility, were freely and universally admitted to be beyond all contemporaneous competition. Her exquisite taste and classical correctness in costume also won unlimited admiration, and her dresses were frequently recommended to the belles of her time as models of elegance and propriety.

Many reasons have been assigned for the comparative neglect she experienced in her profession, even

while she was acknowledged and proclaimed by all American critics to be the first actress of her time.

In Boston and Philadelphia she had become familiar to the audiences long before she became highly distinguished and the general public of both cities had a stronger craving for novelty than for excellence. In New York, although the desire for novelty was equally strong, dramatic aspirants in her day must bear the stamp of foreign approval ere they could be cordially welcomed to its boards; and it must be remembered that the theatre-going population then did not amount to much more than one eighth of its present number. It may also be suspected that her art was almost too perfect to be pleasing to persons of quick sensibility, ardent sympathy, and tender feelings, and that the anguish she so closely simulated was by many found too painful to be endured. They extolled as unapproachable but avoided seeing what they really shuddered to behold.

A lady of Boston, widow of a distinguished *litterateur*, writes that she was always impressed with the idea that Mrs. Duff must have endured great sorrows in her private life, or she never could have been so great in her sphere, and that she was PERFECT in every tragic character she undertook.

Popular favor has always been noted for its fickleness, and when curiosity had once been fully gratified, little attention was paid in those times to the encouragement or reward of the highest talent. Most of our greatest players have experienced the ebb as well as the flow of public patronage, and some who once

claimed the highest honors and emoluments of stars have been glad to obtain any position in a theatre by which they could earn their daily bread. Fortune made Edwin Forrest independent of the stage, but the cruelly empty houses that frowned on his last public efforts must have cut him to the soul.*

* Even as early as 1833 Mr. Forrest, who sometimes drew eighteen hundred dollars per night at the Park Theatre, New York, played an engagement there to an average of three hundred and fifty-seven and a benefit of four hundred and sixty-eight; and another in 1840, ten nights of which did not reach three hundred dollars; and five others were less than four hundred dollars per night, — one being as low as one hundred and sixty-three. In 1842 he was forced to play at the National Chatham Theatre, N. Y., with reserved seats at fifty cents each. Madame Celeste, who was one of the most attractive stars ever known here, played and danced at the Park in 1839, sixteen nights, to an average of two hundred and eighty-three dollars, two benefits included. Mr. Vandenhoff (the elder) and his daughter, sterling and popular artists, in March, 1840, at the Park Theatre, drew for nine nights an average of only one hundred and eighty-two dollars, their benefits being five hundred and twenty-seven and five hundred and sixty-seven dollars in addition. Mr. Hackett in March, 1841, played five nights to an average of one hundred and ten, benefit included; and Mrs. Maeder who, when Clara Fisher, could command fifteen hundred dollar houses, played many nights in 1841 to less than one hundred. Miss Cushman, on the occasion of her greatest hit in the character of *Nancy Sikes*, at the Park Theatre in 1839, for the first sixteen performances drew average houses of only one hundred and ninety-six, the largest receipts on any one night being two hundred and eighty-four. Her benefit on the 15th of March, 1840, when she played *Lady Teazle*, drew only one hundred and fifty-two dollars, about half the expenses of the night.

Mrs. Duff unfortunately was not a business woman. She knew not how to turn circumstances to her own advantage, but allowed herself to be governed and controlled by them. Nor did she practise those little politic arts so frequently found of service in advancing one's pecuniary interest. She did not seem to be aware of the professional importance of influential personal friends. Unambitious of social distinction, she never courted the acquaintance of the wealthy and fashionable whose patronage would have been the sure means of attracting numerous ready followers. She relied solely on her own wonderful professional powers as the means of pecuniary success. She is said not to have appreciated her own value, and by accepting engagements at minor theatres and at a small salary to have lessened her theatrical repute. Moreover it is felt that she was too constantly before the public during each season at one place. All this was probably true; but the claims of her family rendered an engagement always a necessity, and the youth of its numerous members required her to forego frequent changes of locality. Her managers however knew (if she did not) the importance of her services, for they always announced her in glowing terms and giant types, and never allowed her to sink from her high position into a lower line of business.

The public imagined it could see Mrs. Duff at any time; and hence, so far as she was concerned, arose that unjustifiable apathy which frequently attends the progress of those with whom we are most familiar, — because they are familiar to us and not because their

superior merit is not fully discerned or appreciated. In New York many of her admirers constantly deferred a visit to her performances till she should be re-engaged at the Park Theatre, or until a more favorable opportunity arrived, neither of which events ever happened to occur. Long after her marriage and retirement there were those who were steadily looking for her return to the Metropolitan stage, and frequent regrets were expressed that previously available occasions to study her strikingly wonderful delineations had not been seized.

Farewell engagements and farewell benefits were not then advertised to create a factitious excitement. Had Mrs. Duff however announced a series of performances as her last upon the stage, there can be little doubt, judging from the furor her almost unadvertised and critically unnoticed last appearances in a little theatre did create, that even in New York she would have been gratified by the attendance of a succession of brilliant audiences and perhaps a flattering farewell demonstration. But such was not to be her destiny. Her engagements in New York and Philadelphia were probably not intended to be her last, for she was still comparatively young. Time had not dimmed her intellectual brightness, age had not withered nor custom staled her infinite variety of tragical expression; and many busy years could yet have been numbered before she was to reach an age when her nominal rival, Mrs. Barnes, or her eminent successors, Fanny Kemble, Ellen Tree, or Charlotte Cushman, deemed it advisable for them to seek the quiet pleasures of domestic retire-

ment. But the hopes and aspirations of the new religious life to which her latter days seemed especially attuned, and were so steadfastly devoted, suddenly removed her to a different sphere, where alone she found peace and joy, and which allowed no vain regrets for triumphs she might still have won on the mimic stage.

Her lengthened absence from the boards of which she was so long the pride and glory, and the honors since paid to many a brilliant and successful star, should not cause us to forget the unparalleled estimation in which she was once held, nor be permitted to dim in the slightest degree the lustre of the crown that long graced her brow, as the legitimate and undisputed Queen of the American Stage.

APPENDIX I.

A LIST OF CHARACTERS PERFORMED BY MRS. DUFF.

Adela	She Would be a Soldier.
Adelgitha	Adelgitha.
Adeline	Adeline.
Agatha Friberg	Lovers' Vows.
Aladdin	Aladdin.
Alexina	The Exile.
Alexina	Tekeli.
Almeida	Black Beard.
Almeyda	The Renegade.
Amazaide	Zembucca.
Amelia	The Robbers.
Amelia	Incog.
Amelia St. Germain	The Fate of a Gamester.
Angela	The Castle Spectre.
Angelina	Love Makes a Man.
Annabel	Julian.
Annabel	The Man of Ten Thousand.
Annette	Maid and Magpie.
Annette	Blue Devils.
Arabella	More Ways than One.
Bellamira	Bellamira.
Belvidera	Venice Preserved.
Bertha	The Point of Honor.
Blanche	The Iron Chest.

Countess Adela	The Warlock of the Glen.
Countess Lovelaugh	Rochester.
Countess Rosalvina	The Devil's Bridge.
Calanthe	Damon and Pythias.
Caroline Dormer	The Heir-at-Law.
Caroline Heartly	The Boarding House.
Celestine	The Fortress.
Cephania	The Ethiop.
Charlotte	Love à la Mode.
Charlotte	The Gamester.
Charlotte	Werter.
Charlotte Rusport	The West Indian.
Christine	Tekeli.
Cicely Homespun	The Heir-at-Law.
Cinderella	Cinderella (Pantomime).
Clara de Clare	Marmion.
Clari	The Maid of Milan.
Claudia	Rienzi.
Claudine	The Miller and his Men.
Constantia	The Man of the World.
Cora	Columbus.
Cora	Pizarro.
Cordelia	King Lear.
Crazy Bet	Brier Cliff.
Crazy Nab	The Cradle of Liberty.
Desdemona	Othello.
Donna Angelica	The Students of Salamanca.
Donna Leonora	The Duel.
Donna Teresa	Remorse.
Donna Victoria	A Bold Stroke for a Husband.
Edmond	The Blind Boy.
Eliza Ratcliff	The Jew.
Elizabeth	The Golden Farmer.
Elizabeth	Mazeppa.
Elizene	The Forest of Hermanstadt.
Ella Rosenberg	Ella Rosenberg.

Ellen Douglas	The Knight of Snowdoun.
Ellen Douglas	The Lady of the Lake.
Ellen Enfield	The Falls of Clyde.
Ellen Meredith	The Gazette Extraordinary.
Ellen Vortex	A Cure for the Heartache.
Elspat McTavish	The Highland Widow.
Elvira	Pizarro.
Elvira	Bunker Hill.
Emilia	Othello.
Emily	Laugh When You Can.
Emily	Frightened to Death.
Emily Worthington	The Poor Gentleman.
Emma	William Tell.
Emma Somerton	Too Late for Dinner.
Empress Elizabeth	The Exile.
Eugenia	The Foundling of the Forest.
Evadne	Evadne.
Fanny	The Clandestine Marriage.
Fanny	Who Wants a Guinea ?
Floranthe	The Mountaineers.
Florence	The Curfew.
Florinda	The Apostate.
Frances Wharton	The Spy.
Georgiana	Folly as it Flies.
Geraldine	The Foundling of the Forest.
Grace Gaylove	The Review.
Helen Macgregor	Rob Roy.
Helen Mar	Wallace.
Helena di Rosalvi	The Hunter of the Alps.
Hermione	The Distrest Mother.
Immalee	Melmoth the Wanderer.
Imogine	Bertram.
Innogen	Adelemorn the Outlaw.
Irene	Blue Beard.
Irene	Barbarossa.
Isabella	Isabella.
Isabella	The House of Aspen.

Isabella	The Wonder.
Jane	Tom and Jerry.
Jane Shore	Jane Shore.
Jeanie Deans	The Heart of Mid Lothian.
Jessy Oatland	A Cure for the Heartache.
Jessy Willis	Debtor and Creditor.
Julia	The Rivals.
Julia Cleveland	The Votary of Wealth.
Julia Faulkner	The Way to get Married.
Julia Tarragon	The School of Reform.
Juliana	The Honeymoon.
Juliet	Romeo and Juliet.
Julio	Deaf and Dumb.
Katherine	Katherine and Petruchio.
Lady Amaranth	Wild Oats.
Lady Anne	Richard III.
Lady Constance	King John.
Lady Cranberry	Exchange no Robbery.
Lady Elinor Irwin	Every One Has His Fault.
Lady Elizabeth Freelove	The Day after the Wedding.
Lady Frances Touchwood	The Belle's Stratagem.
Lady Grace	The Provoked Husband.
Lady Jane	Know Your Own Mind.
Lady Lucretia	Ladies at Home.
Lady Macbeth	Macbeth.
Lady Margaret	The Vampire.
Lady Melmoth	Folly as it Flies.
Lady Percy	Henry IV.
Lady Priory	Wives as they Were.
Lady Randolph	Douglas.
Lady Rodolpha	The Man of the World.
Lady Squander	The Green Man.
Lady Traffic	Riches.
Lady Trueman	The Drummer.
Leonora	The Revenge.
Lissette	The Sergeant's Wife.
Louisa	The Duenna.

Louisa Dudley	The West Indian.
Lucy Ashton	The Bride of Lammermoor.
Lucy Bertram	Guy Mannering.
Lucy Fairlove	Ambrose Gwinett.
Lyieushee Lovell	Lyieushee Lovell.
Madame Clermont	Adrian and Orilla.
Madame D'Anglade	Accusation.
Mrs. Beverley	The Gamester.
Mrs. Bromley	Simpson and Co.
Mrs. Cornflower	The Farmer's Wife.
Mrs. Ferment	The School of Reform.
Mrs. Fitzedward	Sons of Erin.
Mrs. Greville	Secrets Worth Knowing.
Mrs. Haller	The Stranger.
Mrs. Malfort	The Soldier's Daughter.
Mrs. Mortimer	Laugh When You Can.
Mrs. Woodville	The Wheel of Fortune.
Miss Blandford	Speed the Plough.
Miss Hardcastle	She Stoops to Conquer.
Malvina	Oscar and Malvina.
Maria	George Barnwell.
Maria	The School for Scandal.
Marianne	The Dramatist.
Mary	The Innkeeper's Daughter.
Mary	Superstition.
Mary	Will Watch.
Mary Glastonbury	Mary Glastonbury.
Mary Stuart	Mary Stuart.
Mary Thornberry	John Bull.
Mathilde	The Bohemian Mother.
Matilda	The Curfew.
Matilda	Edgar.
Meg Merrilies	Guy Mannering.
Minna Troil	The Pirate.
Miranda	The Busy Body.
Miranda	The Tempest.
Morgiana	The Forty Thieves.

Myrtillo	The Broken Sword.
Nahmeokee	Metamora.
Narramattah	Miantonimoh.
Nelti	Columbus.
Olympia	Ugolino.
Ophelia	Hamlet.
Orasmyn	The Ethiop.
Oriana	The Conquest of Taranto.
Orilla	Adrian and Orilla.
Portia	Julius Cæsar.
Portia	The Merchant of Venice.
Princess Badralbadour	Aladdin.
Queen Elizabeth	Richard III.
Queen Elizabeth	Kenilworth.
Queen Gertrude	Hamlet.
Queen Isabel	Richard II.
Queen Katherine	Henry VIII.
Rebecca	Ivanhoe.
Rosabella	Brazen Mask.
Rosalie Somers	Town and Country.
Rosalind	As You Like It.
Rosamunda	Abællino.
Rose Redland	The Robber's Wife.
Rose Sidney	Secrets Worth Knowing.
Rosine	Altorf.
Rosine Villars	Education.
Rosolia	Zorinski.
Roxana	Alexander the Great.
Selima	Tamerlane.
Selima	Timour the Tartar.
Selina	The Tale of Mystery.
Senona	The Gladiator.
Sigismonda	Tancred and Sigismonda.
Statira	Alexander the Great.
Susan Ashfield	Speed the Plough.
Tarquinia	Brutus.
Therese	Therese.

Tullia	Brutus.
Variella	The Weathercock.
Victoria	Manuel.
Victorine	Victorine.
Virginia	Virginius.
Volumnia	Coriolanus.
Widow Belmore	The Way to Keep Him.
Zamora	The Honeymoon.
Zelinda	The Slave.
Zorayda	The Mountaineers.
Zorayda	The East Indian.
Zulieka	The Bride of Abydos.

Perhaps a few secondary parts performed by Mrs. Duff during her long novitiate at Boston and Philadelphia may not be found in the above list, but it is supposed to contain all her prominent characters, many of which may have had many more repetitions than any available sources of information now disclose. She doubtless played engagements at the South and West of which particulars are not to be obtained.

Of the characters of which records have been found, the one that had the most repetitions is *Mathilde* in "The Bohemian Mother," for which she was announced fifty-two times. *Mrs. Haller* stands next in the list with forty-six personations. *Calanthe* has forty; *Elvira* thirty-nine; *Eugenia* thirty-eight; *Jane Shore* and *Belvidera* thirty-six; *Isabella* thirty-three; *Ellen Douglas* thirty-two; *Florinda* and *Zulieka* thirty-one; *Madame Clermont* thirty; *Queen Elizabeth* twenty-nine; *Mrs. Beverley* twenty-six; *Cora* and *Cordelia* twenty-five; *Juliet* twenty-four; *Lady Randolph* and *Adelgitha* twenty-three; *Rose Redland* twenty-one; *Lady Macbeth* twenty; *Desdemona*, *Imogine*, and *Therese* nineteen; *Hermione* and *Statira* eighteen; *Portia* seventeen; *Annette* sixteen; *Ophelia* fifteen; *Katherine* fourteen; and many others of inferior importance from five to twenty-five representations each.

APPENDIX II.

A LIST OF CHARACTERS PERFORMED BY MR. DUFF.

Abœllino	Abællino.
Abenazack	Aladdin.
Aben Hamet	The Conquest of Taranto.
Adelmorn	Adelmorn the Outlaw.
Adolph d'Anglade	Accusation.
Adrian	Adrian and Orilla.
Alexander the Great	Alexander the Great.
Alfonso	Alfonso, King of Castile.
Alfred Highflyer	A Roland for an Oliver.
Alfred Leslie	Brier Cliff
Anderson	The American Captive.
Antonio	The Merchant of Venice.
Apollo	Midas.
Appius Claudius	Virginius.
Baron Hohendahl	Alasco.
Baron Toraldi	The Devil's Bridge.
Baron Willinghurst	Of Age To-morrow.
Banquo	Macbeth.
Belcour	The West Indian.
Bellair	More Ways than One.
Belmour	The Prodigal.
Benducar	Durazzo.
Benedick	Much Ado About Nothing.

Bertrand	The Foundling of the Forest.
Beverley	The Gamester.
Biron	Isabella.
Black Knight, The	Ivanhoe.
Bob Handy	Speed the Plough.
Bollman	La Fayette.
Bronzely	Wives as They Were, and Maids as They Are.
Brutus	Julius Cæsar.
Count Belino	The Devil's Bridge.
Count de Croissy	The Wandering Boys.
Count de Salviati	The Castle of Paluzzi.
Count de Valmont	The Foundling of the Forest.
Count Evarard	The Fortress.
Count Olmedo	The Kiss.
Count Romaldi	The Tale of Mystery.
Count Valentia	The Child of Nature.
Count Villars	Education.
Col. Cohenberg	The Siege of Belgrade.
Col. Freelove	The Day after the Wedding.
Col. Singleton	The Spy.
Capt. Beldare	Love Laughs at Locksmiths.
Capt. Blumenfelt	How to Die for Love.
Capt. Crevelt	He Would be a Soldier.
Capt. Faulkner	The Way to get Married.
Capt. Irwin	Every One has his Fault.
Capt. Plume	The Recruiting Officer.
Carlos	The Revenge.
Carrol	Oscar and Malvina.
Carwin	Therese.
Cassius	Julius Cæsar.
Charles Austencourt	Man and Wife.
Charles Fervor	Yes or No.
Charles Surface	The School for Scandal.
Clodio	Love Makes a Man.
Colonna	Evadne.
Columbus	Columbus.

Coriolanus	Coriolanus.
Crackley	The Green Man.
Duke Aranza	The Honeymoon.
Duke of Buckingham	Richard III.
Duke of Buckingham	Henry VIII.
Duke of Gloster	Jane Shore.
Don Alphonso	The Duel.
Don Felix	The Wonder.
Don Julio	A Bold Stroke for a Husband.
Don Ordonio	Remorse.
Daran	The Exile.
Dashwould	Know Your Own Mind.
De Camoral	Joan of Arc.
Dennis Brulgruddery	John Bull.
Dick	The Apprentice.
Dick Dowlas	The Heir-at-Law.
Dirck Hatteraick	Guy Mannering.
Doricourt	The Belle's Stratagem.
Dorlin	Adeline.
Dorrington	The Man of Ten Thousand.
Dupely	The Maid of the Oaks.
Earl Douglas	Wallace.
Earl Osmond	The Castle Spectre.
Earl of Richmond	Richard III.
Earl of Rochester	Rochester.
Edgar	King Lear.
Edmund	King Lear.
Egerton	The Man of the World.
Estevan	The Broken Sword.
The Ethiop	The Ethiop.
Eugene de Biron	Henri Quatre.
Evarard	Maid and Magpie.
Father Philip	The Castle Spectre.
Faulconbridge	King John.
Falkland	The Rivals.
Faulkner	Man and Wife.
Felix	The Hunter of the Alps.

Ferment	The School of Reform.
Fitz Edward	The Sons of Erin.
Fitzharding	The Curfew.
Florian	The Foundling of the Forest.
Florid	My Uncle.
Floriville	The Dramatist.
Ford	The Merry Wives of Windsor.
Foster	A Woman Never Vext.
Francis de Moor	The Robbers.
Frank Heartall	The Soldier's Daughter.
Frank Poppleton	Too Late for Dinner.
Frederick	The Poor Gentleman.
Frederick Bertram	The Jew.
Gambia	The Slave.
George Barnwell	George Barnwell.
Gesler	William Tell.
Ghost of Hamlet's Father	Hamlet.
Ghost of Jerry Hawthorn	Death of Life in London.
Giaffier	The Bride of Abydos.
Glenalvon	Douglas.
Goldfinch	The Road to Ruin.
Gossamer	Laugh When You Can.
Gratiano	The Merchant of Venice.
Grindoff	The Miller and his Men.
Guido	Mirandola.
Guiscard	Adelgitha.
Gustavus Vasa	The Hero of the North.
Hamlet	Hamlet.
Harry Dornton	The Road to Ruin.
Harry Herbert	Columbus.
Hassarac	The Forty Thieves.
Heartwell	Riches.
Hemeya	The Apostate.
Henry Morton	The Battle of Bothwell Brig.
Horatio	Hamlet.
Hotspur	Henry IV., First Part.
Howard	The Will.

Iago	Othello.
Indian Chief	She Would be a Soldier.
Ivanhoe	Ivanhoe.
Jacques	As You Like It.
Jaffier	Venice Preserved.
Jean Calas	The Fate of Calas.
Jeremy Diddler	Raising the Wind.
Jerry Hawthorn	Tom and Jerry.
Joe Standfast	The Turnpike Gate.
Joseph Surface	The School for Scandal.
King Henry IV.	Henry IV., Second Part.
King Lear	King Lear.
King Philip of France	King John.
King Richard III.	Richard III.
Kalig	The Blind Boy.
Kenrick	The Heir-at-Law.
Kilmallock	The Mountaineers.
Kilrooney	The Ninth Statue.
Korac	Zembucca.
Lord Duke's Servant	High Life Below Stairs.
Lord Glenbro'	The Pastor's Daughter.
Lord Hastings	Jane Shore.
Lord Henry	Personation.
Lord Maclean	The Lady of the Rock.
Lord Townly	The Provoked Husband.
Lord Trinket	The Jealous Wife.
La Motte	Fontainville Forest.
Lenox	She Would be a Soldier.
Leon	Rule a Wife and Have a Wife.
Lothair	Adelgitha.
Looney Mc Twolter	The Review.
Marquis Calatrava	The Caravan.
Marquis Delancy	The Midnight Hour.
Marquis de Serassi	Ugolino.
Major O'Flaherty	The West Indian.
Mr. Oakley	The Jealous Wife.
Macaire	The Forest of Bondy.

Macbeth	Macbeth.
Macduff	Macbeth.
MacScrape	Netley Abbey.
Malcolm	The Falls of Clyde.
Malec	The Apostate.
Manuel	Manuel.
Marc Antony	Julius Cæsar.
Marmion	Marmion.
Marplot	The Busy Body.
Matthew	The Warlock of the Glen.
Mazeppa	Payne's Mazeppa.
Megrim	Blue Devils.
Mercutio	Romeo and Juliet.
Mertoun, Senior	The Pirate.
Michael	William Tell.
Michael Ducas	Adelgitha.
Michael Perez	Rule a Wife and Have a Wife.
Milligan	Returned Killed.
Moneses	Tamerlane.
Montalto	Bellamira.
Montgomeri	The Carmelite.
Mordent	The Steward.
Moritz	Is He a Prince.
Mountford	Reformation.
Murtoch Delany	The Irishman in London.
Nathaniel Barton	The Deed of Gift.
Neville	Right and Wrong.
Octavian	The Mountaineers.
Opimius	Caius Gracchus.
Orestes	The Distrest Mother.
Oroonoko	Oroonoko.
Orozembo	Pizarro.
Orsino	Alfonso.
Orson	Valentine and Orson.
Osbert	Edgar.
Oscar	Oscar and Malvina.
Osmond	Tancred and Sigismonda.

Othello	Othello.
Prince Altenberg	Adrian and Orilla.
Patrick	The Poor Soldier.
Penruddock	The Wheel of Fortune.
Peregrine	John Bull.
Peter the Great	Peter the Great.
Petruchio	Katherine and Petruchio.
Phantom	Frightened to Death.
Phocion	The Grecian Daughter.
Pierre	Venice Preserved.
Pizarro	Pizarro.
Priuli	Venice Preserved.
Prospero	The Tempest.
Puff	The Critic.
Pyrrhus	The Distrest Mother.
Pythias	Damon and Pythias.
Ratio	Helpless Animals.
Rattan	The Bee Hive.
Reuben Glenroy	Town and Country.
Richard	The Innkeeper's Daughter.
Rinaldo	The Voice of Nature.
Rob Roy	Rob Roy.
Robert	The Vampire.
Robinson Crusoe	Robinson Crusoe.
Roderick Dhu	The Knight of Snowdoun.
Roderick Dhu	The Lady of the Lake.
Rolamo	Clari.
Roldan	Columbus.
Rolla	Pizarro.
Romeo	Romeo and Juliet.
Rosenberg	Ella Rosenberg.
Rostrum	Secrets Worth Knowing.
Rover	Wild Oats.
Sir Brian de Boisguilbert	Ivanhoe.
Sir Callaghan O'Brallaghan	Love à la Mode.
Sir Charles Rackett	Three Weeks after Marriage.
Sir Edward Mortimer	The Iron Chest.

Sir George Staunton	The Heart of Mid Lothian.
Sir George Touchwood	The Belle's Stratagem.
Sir Harry Aspen	The Gazette Extraordinary.
Sir Harry Stormont	The Poor Lodger.
Sir John Melville	The Clandestine Marriage.
Sir John Restless	All in the Wrong.
Sir Larry McMurragh	Who Wants a Guinea?
Sir Lenox Leinster	Exchange no Robbery.
Sir Lucius O' Trigger	The Rivals.
Sir Robert Ramble	Every One has his Fault.
Squire Groom	Love à la Mode.
St. Franc	The Point of Honor.
Sanguinbeck	Cherry and Fair Star.
Scout	The Village Lawyer.
Sebastien	The Renegade.
Selim	Barbarossa.
Shacabac	Blue Beard.
Sharpset	The Votary of Wealth.
Shylock	The Merchant of Venice.
Singles, The Three	Three and the Deuce.
Sparkish	The Country Girl.
Spatterdash	The Young Quaker.
Sponge	Where Shall I Dine?
Stephenoff	Benyowski.
Stranger, The	The Stranger.
Storm	Ella Rosenberg.
Stukely	The Gamester.
Sydenham	The Wheel of Fortune.
Sylvester Daggerwood	Sylvester Daggerwood.
Tangent	The Way to Get Married.
Teague	The Honest Thieves.
Tekeli	Tekeli.
Terry O'Rourke	The Irish Tutor.
Timour	Timour the Tartar.
Tinsel	The Drummer.
Titus	Brutus.
Tom	Tom and Jerry.

Tom Shuffleton	John Bull.
Tom Tick	Folly as it Flies.
Tristram Fickle	The Weathercock.
Tullus Aufidius	Coriolanus.
Unknown, The	Superstition.
Valcour	The Point of Honor.
Valentine	Valentine and Orson.
Valerius	Brutus.
Vapid	The Dramatist.
Walter	The Children in the Wood.
Welford	Darkness Visible.
Wellborn	A New Way to Pay Old Debts.
Werter	Charlotte and Werter.
Wildlove	The Lady and the Devil.
William Tell	The Archers.
Willowear	To Marry or Not to Marry.
Young Marlow	She Stoops to Conquer.
Young Norval	Douglas.
Young Rapid	A Cure for the Heartache.
Zorinski	Zorinski.

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Transcripts of important play-bills, issued during Mrs. Duff's engagements, and newspaper notices of her performances, were kindly furnished by the librarians of the Massachusetts His-

* Since deceased.

torical Society, the Public Library of Boston, the Providence Athenæum, the State Library at Albany, the Mercantile Library of Baltimore, the Charleston Library Society of S. C., the Mercantile Libraries of St. Louis and Cincinnati, and the City Library of New Orleans; while free access to the shelves of the Philadelphia Library, the New York Society Library, and the Historical Society of New York, was generously accorded by their officials. To Mr. Augustus Toedteberg of Brooklyn, N. Y., special thanks are due for valuable assistance.

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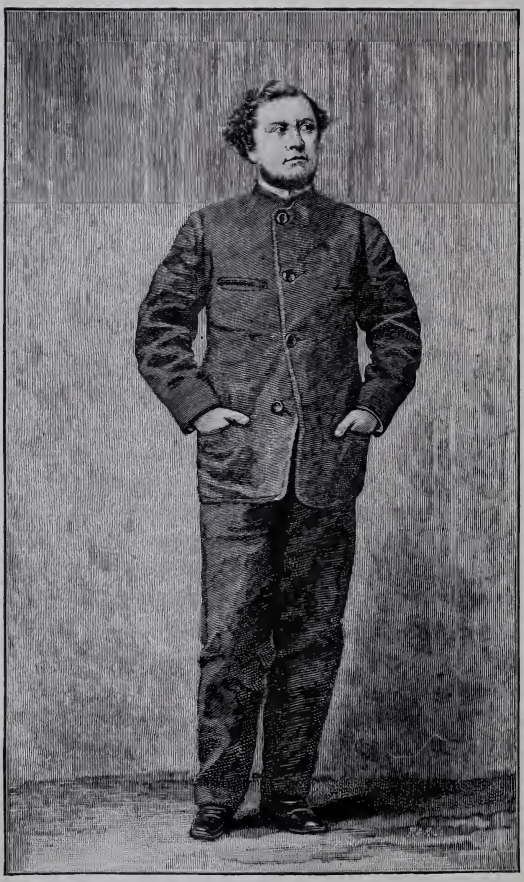

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BY

KATE FIELD

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To the Memory

OF

CHARLES DICKENS

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FECHTER IN EUROPE.

1824–1869.

CHARLES ALBERT FECHTER

IN EUROPE.

1824–1869.

GENIUS is no more a matter of accident than the rising of the sun. Though genius dazzle with the unexpected brilliancy of a comet, like the comet it has its regular orbit, and when the science of art has been discovered, as it will be ere the dawn of the millennium, the world will know the cause as well as the effect of human greatness.

Blood tells under all circumstances, and never has it told a more straightforward story than in the character of Charles Albert Fechter, in whose ancestors we see the beginnings of himself. It is not a little significant that his mother bore the kingly name of Regis, with which name, too, royalty took personal interest, it being an old Piedmontese custom that the king should stand sponser to the twelfth child of any of his subjects. Now it happened that Fechter's maternal grandfather was the twenty-first of twenty-six children; consequently the king became godfather to his twelfth and twenty-

fourth great-grand-uncles! Italian by birth, this grandfather was equally Italian in his profession of carver, yet not so Italian but he could make his home in Flanders, where Fechter's mother, Marie Angélique Regis, was born. Arcaçhon, France, was the birthplace of his father, Jean Maria Guillaume Fechter, his paternal grandfather being a native of Cologne and of German lineage. This grandfather's tendencies were likewise in the direction of art. He found congenial employment in polishing court-suit buttons and in making sword-handles, the latter of which occupations was not scorned by Benvenuto Cellini.

The alphabet of art having been acquired by Fechter's grandparents, it was not strange that they should bequeath greater abilities to their children. Jean Maria Fechter was not only an excellent sculptor, but a born comedian, who, however, confined his acting to private life; while his wife, whom he married in Lisle, was more than usually gifted. Though uneducated, she possessed literary and artistic tastes, writing verses and stories of considerable feeling and deftly turning her fingers to account by the manufacture of artificial flowers. She would take the delicate, almost impalpable tissue that lines the shells of eggs, and, fashioning it into roses, would simultaneously color and scent them with rose-water. But these flowers were too fragile for mortal use, so Madame Fechter resorted to stouter material. Born of Piedmontese parents, she spoke no Italian, very little Flemish, and adopted the language of her husband's chosen home, France.

Gallic as was Fechter *père* in all his feelings, he

never became naturalized. Receiving an offer from Storr and Mortimer, the great jewellers of England, to take the position of the well-known sculptor Tamissier, whose unfortunate habits had rendered him unfit for work, Jean Fechter moved from Paris to London, where, in Hanway Yard, Oxford Street, Charles Albert Fechter was born October 23, 1824. He was the youngest but one of thirteen children, eleven of whom died in infancy. With artistic proclivities on both sides of the house, — with the hot blood of Italy, the speculative blood of Germany, strongly impregnated with French *verve*, flowing through his veins,—it is not strange that Charles Fechter, "the man without a country," should belong to all the world, which Shakespeare tells us is a stage. Learning to read at a very early age, his passion for the drama evinced itself in peculiar theatrical monologues, and in devotion to Shakespeare, — the plays of "Hamlet," "Othello," and "Macbeth" being especial favorites. Appropriating garments belonging to his parents, the youthful Roscius was in the habit of retiring to an unoccupied room where, after locking the door, he blackened his nose and arrayed himself in motley attire. Thus, half-way 'twixt man and woman, he spouted and strutted, to the great terror of the mice and the infinite satisfaction of himself. During these private exhibitions Fechter dedicated his energies to tragedy, but, being endowed with great vivacity, relieved himself, when off duty, by jumping on chairs and tables, drawing caricatures, and playing monkey for the delectation of visitors. Not content with his own interpretation of imaginary heroes, Fech-

ter's passion frequently overcame Fechter's conscience, and many of his father's valuable coins were secretly disposed of in order that, like a bad little cherub, he might sit up aloft among the gods of Drury Lane. There Fechter feasted his eyes and ears on Macready, Charles Kemble, the elder Vandenhoff and the elder Wallack, recollections of whom he retained to his death. Of the four, Charles Kemble, with his charmingly natural acting, was his favorite, and Vandenhoff his "cold blanket." Wallack made a great impression upon him, and Macready delighted him in "William Tell." But the artist of all others whom he worshipped was Malibran. She often held her young lover on her knee, little knowing the amount of sentiment she had inspired in an eight-year-old boy. Poor Malibran! that she with her great heart and great genius should have married a great brute and died neglected!

Sent to Templeton's College at the age of eight, Fechter stood very well, showing great aptitude for Greek and Latin, great fondness for history, — although he never could retain a name or a date, — and despising every branch of mathematics. Largely endowed with imagination, young Fechter entertained his teachers with marvellous stories of adventure, and, magnetizing them as he later magnetized larger audiences in more romantic situations, enjoyed their favor to an unusual extent. Of course a lad of Fechter's mettle could not but be attractive to the bullies of his school, who, true to their prerogative, set upon him in numbers and nicknamed him "French frog." Stung to the quick by this taunt, Fechter resented it, but, fighting single-

handed, was always worsted. "Only come on one at a time and I 'll whip every one of you," said Fechter; but no, the bullies preferred to attack him in a body, and so the "French frog" vowed vengeance. Waylaying the leading persecutor one day, he thoroughly whipped his adversary; the bullies cried "quits," and ever after treated the "French frog" like a true Briton.

England, with all its virtues, was not France to Fechter *père*, who in 1830 once more found himself in Paris; but the Revolution came, and the unhappy sculptor was again driven across the Channel. Though but six years old, Fechter remembered seeing the great Mademoiselle Georges act, and being carried over the barricades on his father's shoulders. This abortive attempt at migration served to endear Paris still more to Jean Fechter's heart, and the failure of 1830 became a *fait accompli* in 1836. Poor as the father was, — the time had been when he had broken up chairs to serve for firewood, — he sent Charles to school at Boulogne-sur-Seine; but at the end of two years the boy returned home to aid in supporting the family. Assisting his father in making bronzes and candelabras, studying French with Hersant his drawing-master, reading the classics, and dreaming of the theatre which he frequented with the constancy of a passionate lover, Charles led a busy life for two years, and at sixteen became the hero of a duel. How did it happen? Foolishly, of course. Taken to the Café Militaire by a friend much older than himself, — a captain in the army, — young Fechter listened to stories of prowess

until, excited by wine and cigars most unwisely given to him, he too longed for an opportunity to prove his courage. The subject of duelling being introduced, there was no man present but could revive some wonderful affair of so-called honor in which he had either killed or wounded his opponent. At least young Fechter could fight a duel if some one would be good enough to insult him; and, flushed with the insidious thief that steals away even the best of brains, he found an enemy in his friend and host. Taking offence at a trifling remark, the aspiring youth slapped the face of Monsieur le Capitaine with his own epaulet and demanded the satisfaction of a gentleman. Badly as the Captain felt, he was forced by that *noblesse*, which so frequently obliges people to make fools of themselves, to accept the challenge. As the challenged party he of course had the choice of weapons, and selected the rapier. With pistols Fechter might kill the Captain; with rapiers the Captain could kill Fechter, but *would* not. So the two met, with their seconds, in that Bois de Boulogne of other days, when it was a gloomy forest sacred to duellists and highwaymen. "Coward!" was Fechter's salutation to his friend; "you have selected the rapier because you know you are master of it. With pistols the chances would have been more even. At least I can call you Coward, and from my soul I do so." Coward indeed! The Captain's only fear was lest, in giving the "satisfaction" for which Hotspur panted, he should not be sufficiently expert to draw the minimum of blood. These fears were realized when Fechter's rapier fell and the blood flowed from his

wrist. The wound, though severe, was not dangerous, and Fechter, having fought his duel and learned how unjust he had been to the Captain, forgot his grievance, embraced his enemy, and was taken home alive to his terrified parents. Would that all equally absurd duels ended as happily!

From the Bois de Boulogne to the Salle Molière, from duelling to private theatricals, seems a long step, yet none too long for Fechter, who in this same year, 1840, made his first appearance behind those footlights by which he had been dazed. The Salle Molière is a small theatre in the Passage Molière, which at that time was used by St. Aulaire, —a famous teacher of acting, Rachel's first instructor, — and let once a week to amateurs for private theatricals. Theirs was a unique company, changing with each performance and singularly enough brought together. A list of the pieces to be played being put up, any one by selecting his part and paying for it — the amount charged being in proportion to the importance of the character — could strut his brief hour upon the stage. Such a republican form of government would lead to eminently doleful results in this country, where actors are made, not born; but France is not America. There, it is said, all men and women are actors by nature, and the worst become professional.

This company of the Salle Molière was eminently successful, — so much so that Fechter's brother-in-law, himself an ardent admirer of the drama, paid the young sculptor's fee, and put his name down for the *jeune premier* in Dumas's "Le Mari de la Veuve." The

amount expended for acting was returned in tickets, so that the aspiring amateurs were always sure of an audience. Fechter's success was so great that he soon became a necessity to the company, one of whose members, now a distinguished diplomatist, (diplomacy is but another name for acting), insisted upon paying Fechter's fees in order that he might be "stirred up" by contact with so magnetic and admirable an actor.

After seeing Fechter perform, St. Aulaire came up with a strange gentleman, saying, "My boy, if you will come to my *cours* (class), I will teach you for nothing." "And if you make the stage your profession, I will give you all my parts," added the unknown, who turned out to be no other than Scribe! Fechter could not accept St. Aulaire's generous offer, for the reason that his father required his assistance in the studio; but he did not forget the great compliment paid him by the first of professors and the first of playwrights, and longed for emancipation.

Temporary release soon came. At this time Duvernoir, a well-known singer, now a professor in the Conservatoire of Paris, was organizing a company for Florence, Italy, and at the last moment lost his juvenile actor, Gaston, who was unexpectedly drafted into the army. Remembering the great ability displayed by Fechter at the Salle Molière, Duvernoir offered him the vacant situation. A winter in Florence, all the "interesting lovers," and a salary combined! The offer proved irresistible, and in spite of fatherly expostulation the stage-struck youth set off for Italy in January, 1841.

To dream of acting and to act are sadly different, as *le jeune premier* soon found to his cost. Starting with a modest wardrobe, he made the mournful discovery that his requirements greatly exceeded his possessions, and straightway developed latent abilities in tailoring and boot-making. Fechter not only made his own dresses, but cut those of actors as impecunious as himself. But top-boots, — what should he do for these very expensive and very necessary articles? The question was father to the answer. Is not genius ever equal to an emergency? What should he do for top-boots? Why, invent them, of course! So out of thin oil-cloth Fechter manufactured a pair of boots of so stylish a cut and perfect a fit as to be the envy of his associates. Love-making in those top-boots must have possessed a double fascination. It could not have been bootless. Ah, and there was that crowning glory of man, a hat! Silk hats are a poor man's natural enemy, yet a lover without a good-looking hat is about as impossible as a pretty woman without a head of hair. But had not Fechter an old hat? What could be easier than to wet it whenever necessary and make it shine like the rising sun? Those home-made clothes, those ingenious boots, and that deceitful hat carried Fechter through his season in Italy, perhaps for the very good reason that the season was not much longer than his original top-boots. Never had Florence known such a winter. The oldest inhabitant went mad in endeavoring to conjure up the ghost of a like recollection. Almanacs were in vain. July invaded January, and the snow on the Apennines, melted by the hot breath

of summer, vanished into thin air. Of what avail to perform French comedy at the *Cocomero* ("Watermelon"), when the astonished Florentines were longing with tragic thirst to eat their accustomed watermelons in the streets? Moreover, there was a rival French troupe at another theatre. One might have survived; the two killed each other.

Nevertheless, Manager Duvernoir persevered in his enterprise for six weeks, and Fechter won praise from the Sir Hubert Stanleys of the period. Strange to say, every play advertised was by Scribe. Those were the good old days of Austrian surveillance, when grand dukes held their court, and censors supervised public morals. Dumas was their *bête noire*, Molière was sniffed at, but Scribe was considered harmless; so Scribe became the author of "Tartuffe," wore Dumas's colors, and displayed a versatility never known before or since. There was no press to tell tales, the censors nursed their blissful ignorance, and the knowing public enjoyed the joke.

Fechter enjoyed a joke of quite a different hue. Returning one night from the theatre, he was assaulted by a thief who, attracted by a very large stage jewel, — a diamond-paste pin which he supposed to be real, — thought it easy work to rob so slight a youth. Fechter's hot blood and practised muscle soon undeceived the robber, who, upon finding himself at a disadvantage, drew a dirk. What was to be done? Fechter spoke not one word of Italian; the robber not one word of French. The language of pantomime was common to both however, and they acted out the following dialogue.

"O strike, if you like," gesticulated Fechter; "I'm entirely unarmed, and you can have it all your own way; but as you want nothing of me but my diamond pin, it is hardly worth while killing me, when you can have it on easier terms."

"How so?" asked the robber.

"Why, I'll make an exchange. Give me that cameo in your shirt-bosom, and I'll give you my diamond."

"You're a queer sort of fellow," replied the robber. "I rather like you. It's a bargain."

Whereupon the exchange took place. Actor and robber shook hands and separated, — the former in possession of a very beautiful cameo, the latter sole proprietor of pinchbeck! What that robber did to himself, upon discovering how completely the tables had been turned, remains a mystery. Certainly Fechter never acted better than on this occasion.

At the end of the six weeks Manager Duvernoir, poor in pocket and in spirits, called his company together, declared himself bankrupt, paid a few cents on a dollar, and dismissed his friends with a tearful blessing. With characteristic generosity Fechter divided his share among the humbler actors, who expressed their gratitude by immediately decamping with a portion of his wardrobe. Penniless, Fechter applied for aid to a banker friend, proposing to leave his clothes, books, etc. as security. Believing the *jeune premier's* word to be as good as his bond, the banker lent him money and gave him a draft on a Marseilles house for one thousand francs. Thus fortified, Fechter started

for France with the virtuous intention of making no use of the draft; but Fechter was young, and found as great difficulty in keeping as in making money. Marseilles was attractive, he might never travel again, and so in Marseilles he remained until his purse became an aching void, and the letter of credit his only friend. Presenting this letter he was received with unaccountable "effusion." "My dear fellow," exclaimed the banker, seizing Fechter's hands and wringing them vigorously, — "my dear fellow, I am delighted to see you. It 's a boy, I tell you it 's a boy, and such a boy! A marvel! You never saw anything like it in your life and you never will, take my word for it. Money? Certainly. Any amount you please to name. I never was so happy in all my life. There! there 's the amount, and to think it 's a boy!"

Entirely bewildered by this extraordinary conduct, Fechter wondered whether he were dealing with an escaped lunatic. He became convinced of it upon finding that the banker asked for no receipt. On suggesting its advisability to the banker the latter replied: "Bless my soul, certainly. Did n't I take a receipt? Well, it 's a boy you know, and how can I think of anything else? There now, it 's all right; here 's what belongs to you, and I 'm the happiest man in the world!" "Well, he is mad," thought Fechter, as he walked away; "a raving maniac," he added, when, upon opening the package, he discovered his receipt! Returning, Fechter apprised the banker of his mistake, and handed back the important voucher. "Great Heaven!" he exclaimed, "you don't say so? *Did* I

do that? Well, well, — it 's a boy and a beauty. We have n't yet decided upon a name, but I 'll write you all about it for I 'm sure you 'll want to know." And again the happy banker took an affectionate farewell of his young customer with the final explanation that the "boy" was his first child!

It was a welcome day to Fechter's parents when the prodigal son returned. "No more theatre," said the father; "I want you to be a sculptor." So Fechter became a student of the Académie des Beaux Arts, working there every evening after spending his days over bronzes in his father's studio. Work, however, did not lessen his love of fun, which found many an outlet. One night he, in company with equally exuberant students, locked up an *écrivain public* (letter-writer for the ignorant poor) in his portable box of a shop, and, wheeling him off, left him several miles from his beat. The little man pounded, the little man scolded, the little man did his best to get out of the window; but little as he was, the window was less, and there in solitude and rage he passed the night, no police coming to his rescue until the next morning. Unable to give any explanation of his strange situation, the little man got the credit of temporary insanity, — a verdict of great popularity with all juries averse to investigation.

Fechter's thoughts never failed to return to his first love, for it was during this same year, 1841, that he entered the Conservatoire with the determination of studying for the Théâtre Français. He aspired to grand rôles, and wished to base his style on classic

models. Fired with ambition, he went before his judges. First among the inquisitors came Professor Provost, who eyed young Hotspur with disdainful pity. Those who knew the broad-shouldered, full-chested Fechter can hardly think of him as a very thin, very long, and sentimentally delicate youth; yet such was his appearance in 1841.

"Now, sir," said the grim professor, "what do you want?"

"I want to be an actor."

"An actor, indeed! Permit me to assure you that acting is out of the question. You've no lungs, sir; you are consumptive, sir; and my advice to you is to take a great deal of exercise. When you walk, throw your coat open and your shoulders back, put your thumbs in the armholes of your vest, and take long respirations. If you follow my advice you may live, but you can never be an actor."

Conscious of power, and by no means persuaded that the gods loved him sufficiently to mark him for an early death, Fechter ran the gauntlet of the entire Conservatoire. Michelot was his next critic.

"Eh bien, what will you recite?"

"I am up in *Séide* of Voltaire's 'Mahomet.'"

"That will do very well. Allons."

Sitting up after the manner of orchestral conductors, Michelot made an imaginary baton of his right arm and began to beat time as if the performance were operatic, and the youth before him a tenor about to sing his first romanza. This was too much for Fechter, whose eyes and ears were of the quickest, whose sense of humor

was most acute, and whose audacity was almost unparalleled in the annals of the stage. Acting upon the impulse of the moment he carried out Michelot's suggestion, rushed forward with operatic gesticulation, sang Voltaire's hexameters, and turned heavy tragedy into laughable burlesque. The effect upon Michelot can be more readily imagined than described. There was nothing to be said, because this suiting the voice to Michelot's action was too clever and appropriate a satire for words, especially as those present enjoyed the joke immensely.

In his third trial Fechter stood up before Samson.

"You will attempt *Séide*," said Samson. "Very well, begin at the fourth act."

"But, M. Samson," remonstrated the youth, "I'd rather begin at the beginning. I must get warmed up before I can do my best in that act."

"Nonsense," replied Samson. "You ought to be able to begin anywhere. Let me have the fourth act."

Obeying the sovereign command, Fechter plunged *in medias res*, going through the dramatic interview between *Séide* and *Palmire* as far as the question, "Qui? Zopire?" in scene fourth. Giving this with all the dramatic intensity demanded by the situation, the young tragedian was taken aback by Samson's interruption: "Plus bête, mon ami, plus bête. 'Qui? Zopire?' doit être plus bête!"

"I really cannot say it like you, sir," replied Fechter, and the rebellious youth was ordered down.

Last came Beauvallet, with whom Fechter had much better success, being allowed to go through *Séide* with-

out comment. "That will do," said Beauvallet, "you are quite as bad as any of those at the Théâtre Français," — a gruff compliment which was taken advantage of by him when, after Fechter's début, he claimed the revolutionary *Séide as a pupil!*

At the end of three weeks Fechter left the Conservatoire, disgusted with a régime in which no two professors agreed. Provost, Michelot, and Samson had removed the reverential veil from his eyes, and, losing respect for their judgment, he refused to submit to their instruction. Disheartened, he discarded all thoughts of the stage, although he still memorized the classics and pursued his study of the French language with his old professor, Didier. Putting his best energies into his night work at the Beaux Arts, he labored diligently for three years, and the summer of 1844 found him one of the graduating class competing for the first grand medal, which includes the high honor of being sent to Rome for five years at the expense of the government. Each scholar becomes a state's prisoner. He is condemned to solitary confinement, with one hour's solitary exercise per day; and at the end of six weeks, wet clay his only companion, is expected to take the form of a bas-relief of original composition. The subject is always given and the best work obtains the prize. With emulation fully aroused, — anxious also to please his father, whose fondest hope was that his son should be a sculptor, — Fechter went to work with gusto upon the story of the Good Samaritan. Making the composition as simple as possible, introducing the bare facts of two male figures and a donkey, Fechter saw in the classic

dress an opportunity for the display of his knowledge of the human form, and took advantage of it. Finishing his task long before the expiration of the time specified, he was yet held in durance vile until the last moment, when he returned home to await the verdict of the examining committee.

Meanwhile Fechter's brother-in-law had been quietly working in an entirely different direction. Never forgetting his own and Fechter's passion for the stage, and believing that the lad was born for "only this and nothing more," Monsieur le Beau Frère inscribed Fechter's name on the list of applicants for débuts at the Théâtre Français. Any one is given this liberty; and if, after a test rehearsal, the applicant be deemed satisfactory, he is entitled to three public débuts, after which he is dismissed or received into the regular company, according to the ability displayed. Thus it happened that while Fechter was nervously awaiting the verdict of the Academy, he received an order to present himself before the tribunal of the Théâtre Français. Ignorant of the part played by his brother-in-law, and concluding that he had been called on the strength of merit only, he prepared himself as best he could. Trembling with fear he faced the unseen and unknown judges who sat before him, swallowed up in the darkness which reigns throughout the auditorium of a theatre by day. With a few footlights for inspiration, and Rachel's sister, Rebecca Félix, for prompter, Fechter began *Séide*, — the same rôle which he had rehearsed at the Conservatoire, and again selected because of its scope for the display of human

passions. Slavery, religious fanaticism, and love make up a character of flesh and blood very difficult to delineate, but entirely in sympathy with a mind like Fechter's, that sought for nature in everything it attempted to grasp. Few of the French classical plays possess the humanity of "Mahomet," and it is significant that from the outset Fechter recognized the power of real "situations." Singularly enough Talma selected the same rôle for his début, — a fact unknown to Fechter, and therefore suggestive of rapport between the two minds.

Fechter had not recited more than half of *Séide* when a voice from out the darkness exclaimed, "That will do; now for comedy." Once more bracing himself to the task, he began the light-comedy part of *Valère*, the lover in Molière's "Tartuffe." Again, when half-way through, the unknown voice broke the gloomy silence with, "That will do; call another," — and Fechter bowed himself off the stage, utterly ignorant of the effect produced upon the jury; but before leaving the theatre he overheard the dismissal of his successor, a woman, without any trial in comedy. "At least I have received better treatment than she," thought Fechter; and laying this flattering unction to his soul he went back to his studio in the Rue Paradis des Poissonnières.

Left in uncertainty, Fechter led a divided life between studying for the stage and modelling. Racine, Corneille, and Voltaire shared the honors with the "Seven Capital Sins," — the subject he had selected to put into clay. These Capital Sins were to be rep-

resented around the same table, seated or otherwise, according to individual character, and carrying out the dominant passion in action and facial expression. Surely a good idea, but immensely difficult of treatment. It was because of its difficulty that Fechter selected the subject; and who can tell how great a sculptor posterity has lost?

Three months passed by, and, hearing nothing from the Théâtre Français, Fechter was again about to abandon the idea of acting, when a dragoon knocked at his door, and placed two official documents in his hands. The first announced the award by the Académie des Beaux Arts of the first grand medal; the second contained a call for Fechter's début at the Théâtre Français! No wonder that the youth of nineteen had an *accès de joie* at this embarrassment of riches. No wonder that Fechter *père* wellnigh danced with delight.

The prize had been won; would he go? "No, I cannot," said the son.

"You must," replied the father.

"It is impossible," answered the son. "My heart is wedded to the theatre."

The distress of Fechter *père* at this decision caused young Hotspur to relent so far as to offer to risk his future on a fencing-match with his father, the winner to decide whether it should be Rome or the stage.

"No, no," said his father, "I 'll do no fencing, for at that you must surely win."

"Well, then, we 'll toss up; heads I win, tails you lose."

To this the father consented. *Heads won*, and in December, 1844, Fechter made his début in conjunction with Rebecca Félix. The rôles were *Séide* and *Valère*, for which he had but one rehearsal. Rebecca Félix performed the part of *Palmire*.

From the beginning Fechter had ideas of his own; and, once convinced of having attained the truth in his art, no one could turn him from his purpose. The scene of Voltaire's "Mahomet" is laid in Mecca. *Séide, Mahomet's* slave, is an Arab, and should be dressed like an Arab, precedents to the contrary notwithstanding. So, armed with a fine Arab costume which hung in his studio, Fechter went to his dressing-room on the night of his début. There on a chair lay the properties supplied for *Séide* by the theatre, — blue and white satin, to contrast with the pink and white satin of *Palmire*, who, Arab as she ought to look, would be painted red and white, like the fairest of Circassians! Stern in his resolve Fechter laid aside rouge, whiting, and satin, gave a dark olive tint to his complexion, donned his Arab costume, and went to the wings to await his cue.

"Mon Dieu! what horror do I behold?" screamed Geoffroy, the administrator of the week. "What do you mean by thus insulting established custom? Off with the vile stuff! Go to your room and put on the proper dress."

Flying from Geoffroy's rage Fechter, with no intention of obeying orders, retired under the stage, where he remained until sought for by the call-boy, when he rushed on to begin the second act, which is *Séide's* first

appearance. A murmur ran through the audience, followed by a rustle which Fechter took for disapprobation. In an agony of doubt as to what would be the result of his temerity, he had almost lost his presence of mind, when a burst of applause and encouraging *bravos* assured him of sympathy before, if not behind, the curtain.

The real work of *Séide* begins with the fourth act, where, in the interview with *Palmire*, the slave he loves, not knowing her to be his sister, he reveals the dreadful oath he has taken to serve *Mahomet* by killing *Zopire* (his unknown father), to whom he is drawn by an unaccountable sympathy. This passionate dialogue, the appearance of *Zopire* kneeling at the altar of his gods, *Séide's* working himself up to the requisite amount of frenzy for the deed, and his return to *Palmire* after its accomplishment, wild in look and falling from exhaustion, as he exclaims,

> "Où suis-je? et quelle voix m'appelle?
> Je ne vois point Palmire; un dieu m'a privé d'elle,"

were a revelation to the spectators of the Théâtre Français, who had been educated on declamation and propriety. Distracted and panting, *Séide* lay upon the ground, giving the question, "Qui, Zopire?" in answer to that of *Palmire*, "Zopire, a-t-il perdu la vie?" with a start and a heart-rending voice that thrilled the spectators.

> "Ah! grand Dieu! Dieu de sang altéré,
> Ne persécutez point son esprit égaré.
> Fuyons d'ici!"

exclaims *Palmire*. Here *Séide* tried to rise, but falling on his knees,

"Je sens que mes genoux s'affaissent,"

delivered the confession of his crime, half reclining and half kneeling, not regaining sufficient strength to stand until the whole is told. No wonder that the public, accustomed to see *Séide* obey Voltaire's printed "business" (*Il s'assied*), and *sit on a chair* in true Oriental fashion, lost all sense of decorum, and actually called out the real Arab at the end of this act. This was a rare compliment for those days and never before known in "Mahomet." No less effective was Fechter in the last act, where, coming on delirious with poison administered unknown to him by *Mahomet's* orders, *Séide* calls upon the people to avenge *Zopire's* death, denounces *Mahomet*, and dies in the arms of his followers. Years before, this scene had been cut out on account of its difficulty, but Fechter had stomach for it all; and, when the curtain fell, his début was pronounced the success of the night. Rachel came to him, saying "You must act in my pieces; I will play with nobody else."

Fechter selected *Valère* for his début in comedy, because it gave him time to rest, *Valère* not appearing until act second, and because it was short. There is really only one good scene, quite enough however to prove capacity, which was all that the occasion demanded. Again Fechter made a revolution in costume, wearing the dress of Louis the Fourteenth's time, the scene of "Tartuffe" being laid in the Paris of *le grand monarque*. Heretofore the costume had not

16. March 74.

Chère amie,

Stuart vient, à l'instant de me donner votre adresse que Madame S. S. m'avait remise en scène, au Lyceum, le soir de la dernière représentation, et qui fut égarée -

Je savais que c'était dans Gramercy Park et je m'y promenais une heure, le jour suivant, espérant vous apercevoir, mais en vain !

J'en fus absolument

Desolé, ayant entendu que je pourrais vous être utile, en quelque chose.

Je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire que vous pouvez disposer de mon affection; et que je suis tout à votre service?

Faites donc état de moi; et — si vous êtes en ville — laissez moi savoir, par un mot, quelle est l'heure la plus favorable pour vous rendre visite; et me mettre à vos ordres

Votre sincère:

Chas. Fechter

210. East. 14th St.
N. Y.

been strictly correct. The curtain fell upon a second success. Fechter had won his spurs in tragedy and comedy — in Voltaire and Molière — on the classic stage of the Théâtre Français, and had already gained Rachel's good will. Human nature is weak, artists are sadly jealous, and perhaps it is not strange that old *sociétaires* looked with ill favor upon the youth of nineteen who had jumped so suddenly into popularity. It was easy to reap a pitiful harvest of revenge; so the following week when Fechter went upon the stage to rehearse *Curiace* in Corneille's "Les Horaces" and *Dorante* in "Le Menteur," which parts he had chosen for his second début, he found himself without support. Righteously indignant at this unseemly slight, Fechter left word that he would act in neither piece, and the manager might get somebody else. Later entreaty availed naught; old *sociétaires* assumed their old rôles and the début was postponed another week.

What said Jules Janin, the prince of dramatic critics, the man who could not be bought with money, but who revenged himself upon such artists as did not pay him court? "Bravo! bravissimo!" murmured Janin in private; "come and see me, Fechter." Quixotically independent and indifferent to the verdict of critics, Fechter offended Janin's *amour propre* by staying away. So the *feuilleton* that followed the representations of "Les Horaces" and "Le Menteur," in both of which Fechter was supposed to have appeared, but which he threw up as has already been told, contained a most savage onslaught upon Fechter's *Curiace* and *Dorante*. The actor had his critic com-

pletely on the hip, but took no further advantage than to write the following private note : —

"Dear Janin, — Your criticism is excellent : true in every particular, except in attributing the acting of *Curiace* and *Dorante* to me. *I performed in neither part!*"

In the next week's *feuilleton* the impartial critic stated that, owing to gross carelessness, his manuscript had been misprinted. His remarks àpropos of Mr. Fechter were intended for his rehearsal, and *not* for the performance, in which other artists had appeared. It was quite evident from this second falsehood that Janin meant war to the knife ; so Fechter returned the blow by publicly stating that, inasmuch as he had never rehearsed the parts criticised by M. Jules Janin, the explanation of the latter could hardly be called satisfactory ! After this terrible and justifiable *exposé*, what was left for Janin but silence ? And silence was his enduring revenge. Even after Fechter's marvellous success in "La Dame aux Camélias" Janin made but a passing notice of his name, which was recorded among the supernumeraries. In Paris, as well as in America, personality degrades art.

The young *Séide* had not been three weeks a *pensionnaire* at the Théâtre Français before he broke an audacious lance in behalf of republican institutions. Entering the green-room for the first time, he saw all the *sociétaires* ranged on one side of the fireplace and the *pensionnaires* on the other. The former re-

ceived their appointment originally from the first Napoleon, who accorded to the Théâtre Français a yearly subvention of sixteen thousand pounds sterling. Since then *sociétaires* have been elected by their own body. They divide the profits of the theatre among themselves, — at the end of twenty years can retire on a pension of five thousand dollars, or, remaining longer in the profession, are entitled to a still larger pension. Thus does France foster art. *Sociétaires* consequently hold the reins in their own hands; while *pensionnaires*, being on a salary and lower in official grade, are made to feel the difference between the throne and the step leading to it. "What 's the meaning of this?" asked Fechter. "Why are all the *sociétaires* in one row and the *pensionnaires* in another? Is there no equality among artists?" With this the young democrat sprang from one side of the wide fireplace to the other and, landing among the *sociétaires*, began talking to Beauvallet as if nothing unusual had occurred, and as if *pensionnaires* had a right to trespass upon sacred ground.

Fechter's second débuts, when he appeared in "Les Horaces" with Rachel, and in "Le Menteur," were received with plaudits. In the comedy Fechter again taught actors and public a lesson by wearing a thoroughly correct Charles-the-Second dress. So pronounced was the success that then and there Fechter became a regular member of the Théâtre Français, the high powers not deeming it necessary to await his third débuts. La Rue being lazy and Maillard ill, Fechter at first had many opportunities of testing his

ability. Rachel's desires were fulfilled, and she found wonderful support in the stripling who, ignoring precedents, made human beings of *Hippolyte*, *Oreste*, *Xiphares*, *Bajazet*, and *Nérestan*. It was at the conclusion of "Zaire" that Regnier came behind the scenes and, addressing the assembled *sociétaires*, exclaimed "Now mark my words. I tell you that he is better than any of you." Such outspoken criticism was not likely to promote the interests of a beginner who was himself none too politic. Moreover Buloz had private reasons for advancing a vastly inferior actor, and Fechter was soon made to feel the difference between favoritism and real worth. Appearing in the comedies of "Valérie," "Les Femmes Savantes," "Les Précieuses Ridicules," "Le Dépit," "Le Ménage Parisien," "Le Misanthrope," "Tartuffe," "Les Fourberies de Scapin," and "La Vestale," he at last found himself shorn of almost every part rightfully his own. Notwithstanding that Dumas *père* wrote the prominent male character in "La Fille du Régent" for Fechter, and spoke of having done so, when the play came to be cast Fechter found a part in the prologue assigned to him. Easy in his principles, Dumas had been talked over by Buloz and others.

Though Fechter had a right to a third début with his own selection of parts, though it is a rule that every débutant shall perform the parts of every début at least twice during his first year, or whenever the plays are brought out, these rights were denied. Fechter felt that the *sociétaires* never intended to give him fair play; and when, at the beginning of 1846, the salary of every

pensionnaire except himself was raised, the intention could not be mistaken. After appealing in vain for justice Fechter frankly avowed his opinion, and at the end of eighteen months left the theatre in a glory of indignation. A man of less spirit and more phlegm might have known better how to subvert the machinations of rivals; but in all probability a man of less spirit would not have been so good an actor, and therefore could not have fared so ill. Extraordinary ability is a dangerous possession, unless it be master of the situation and be tempered with wisdom. Wisdom and Fechter were never boon companions. Thus closed Fechter's career at the Théâtre Français.

With illusions gone, with aspirations clouded, Fechter returned to his studio for the fourth time, and betook himself to modelling. Once more he went to work upon the Seven Capital Sins, and it is safe to conclude that he put a great deal of devilish expression into the face of Envy. "Theatres!" he said; "never say Theatre to me. I 've done with the stage. Henceforth I am a sculptor." And so the actor believed; but Fate knew better. One day it chanced — as it always chances, in life as well as in books — that Dacier, the celebrated baritone, brought St. Aubin, once leading actor at the Gymnase and then manager of the Berlin Theatre Royal, to Fechter's studio for the purpose of seeing his statue. "By the way," said St. Aubin, "are you related to Fechter of the Théâtre Français, about whom I 've heard so much?"

"Well, rather," replied the sculptor; "I am that identical individual."

"Is it possible? Then how is it that you are at work here?"

"For the reason that I have renounced the stage. I shall never act again."

"What, you? the most promising man of the day? This will never do. Come with me to Berlin. I am forming a company for the Theatre Royal; you shall have just the parts you like, and as you will be paid by the government, you need have no fear on the score of money."

Fechter accepted this offer; the Seven Capital Sins were once more wrapped in wet cloths, and with the agility of Harlequin the sculptor transformed himself into an actor. There was nothing that Fechter did not do in Berlin. He was everything by turns and nothing long. He was the best actor in the troupe "either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-comical, scene individable, or poem unlimited." He had a fine robust tenor voice, and sang, entirely by ear, the music of *Daniel* in the opera of "Le Chalet." He played Paul Taglioni's ballet of "Le Corsair," and executed the dances with admirable effect. He made a great success as *Le Père Turlultutu*, in "One Hundred Years Old," and still another in doubling *Buckingham* and *Tyrrell* in "Les Enfants d'Edouard," a piece taken from Shakespeare's "Richard III." Fechter was so entirely transformed in the second assumption that the public failed to recognize him until the end of the act.

Being a very devout Catholic the Queen abstained from theatrical performances, but after repeated en-

treaty from the King, with whom Fechter was a great favorite, she consented to assist at a court representation at Potsdam of Bayard and Mélesville's comedy "Le Chevalier de St. George," and Dupin's "La Polka en Province." Reaching high-water mark, Fechter delighted the court. In the afterpiece Fechter's comedy was so inimitable that the King sent his chamberlain behind the scenes to request him to be less funny, — otherwise his Majesty would die. Misunderstanding the message, and seeing that the King enjoyed the performance, Fechter became more and more comical, until royalty degenerated into base humanity and was carried out of his box in a state of exhaustion from laughing. The Queen expressed her admiration in an autograph letter, accompanied by busts of Schiller, Goethe, and Herder. Not to be outdone, Fechter modelled a Sister of Charity kneeling at prayer, and sent it to the Queen, who placed the artist's gift in the Royal Gallery, where it still remains.

After an unusually prolonged and successful season of nine months Fechter returned to Paris in 1847, and immediately signed an engagement for three years at the Vaudeville, where he looked forward to a reign of peace. The manager was all grace, the public all smiles; and his rendering of the hero *Albert* in "Marguérite" received the approving nod of claque and critics. About two weeks after its production the manager went to Fechter and with simulated enthusiasm exclaimed: "My dear fellow, your performance was admirable. You are the only man to replace Frederic Lemaître. I must make another engagement with you.

The present one is not equal to your merits. Give me the old contract, and I 'll have a better one made out." Dumfounded at this excess of virtue, and not suspecting foul play, Fechter complied with the request. However, after waiting a reasonable time and waiting in vain, he ventured to ask for the new contract. Mr. Manager coolly ignored it. An unworthy power behind the managerial desk had instigated the treachery and caused the written articles to be destroyed.

Stung to the quick by this baseness, and able to produce witnesses to the existence of a contract, Fechter had about decided to go to law, when he met an old artist friend, Anthony Beraud, who was manager of the Ambigu. "Why, what 's the matter, Fechter?" inquired the latter; "you look upset."

"Upset! I should rather think I was." And then followed a narration of what had occurred.

"Now take my advice," said the manager, at the conclusion of the woful story. "Don't go to law, but come to my theatre. I 'll double your present salary, and bind myself by more writing than you 'll care to read."

"Agreed," cried Fechter; and the threatening clouds disappeared.

Prior to this engagement Fechter went to London with a troupe of admirable artists, including Boccage, Cartigny, Montalent, Josset, Mademoiselle Baptiste (granddaughter of the great Baptiste), and others. The season at the St. James's lasted four months, during which time Fechter appeared in standard plays, the most prominent being Sophocles's "Antigone." It

was brought out with great care, and excited unusual attention. The Queen and Prince Consort were constant in their attendance, not being absent more than twenty nights. D'Orsay was seen constantly, and with him Louis Napoleon, who made Fechter's acquaintance and often went behind the scenes to compliment his countryman. Upon bidding Fechter good-by Napoleon seemed much touched at the thought of his own continued exile from France, and said, "The next time we meet will be in the Tuileries."

"That is somewhat doubtful," answered Fechter, "for I really do not intend to be King."

"*No*," replied the man of destiny, "*but I intend to be Emperor!*"

To smile was impossible. Napoleon's tone and manner were such as to convince Fechter that an oracle had spoken, and when the Prince became President of the Republic, Fechter knew how the drama would end. Napoleon was right. The next time they met was in the Tuileries, and when Fechter acted at Fontainebleau, the Emperor took off his watch and chain and begged the artist's acceptance of them.

Fechter made so strong an impression in London that Maddox, manager of the Princess's, went to him with an offer of forty pounds per week for three years if he would appear on the English stage. This was a large salary for those days and the young artist felt greatly inclined to accept it, but there rose before him the promise to his friend of the Ambigu. He wrote to be released, if release were possible. "Impossible," was the reply. "Sue and others are writing

plays for you, and I cannot let you go." So toward the end of February, 1848, Fechter returned to Paris with the expectation of fulfilling this engagement, making his *entrée* in a new play, "La Famille Thureau," the first and only production of an eccentric painter, Lorentz. During the performance of "La Famille Thureau," the story of which is not unlike that of "La Dame aux Camélias," Fechter, while engaged in a dialogue of twelve or fifteen minutes, modelled a statue of Poetry, three feet high. Fair as the prospect was, it did not long continue. A Revolution came between him and public attention; and as the real drama surpassed in interest any that could be feigned, the Ambigu, following the example of other theatres, closed after a season of twelve nights. Freed from obligations Fechter wrote to Maddox, accepting his former offer, but the letter arrived too late. The enterprising manager had already engaged an opera troupe, which absorbed his time and money.

Othello's occupation gone, Fechter solaced himself with fencing and shooting. In those days of anarchy no man knew what destiny lay in wait for him, and discretion led to anticipation of the worst. So Fechter fenced and fired himself into an enviable notoriety. No one dared to quarrel with him, lest a duel might be the consequence. Rochefort always referred to him with deference, and bullies gave him a wide berth. While Fechter was thus vigorously engaged Adrien Decourcelles went to him, saying, "I 've just written a reactionary play called 'Oscar XXVIII.,' which if possible I want to have performed. You are the only

man who has pluck enough to brave the crowd. I 've burlesqued the Revolution. I anticipate what will most certainly happen months hence; and if you and I can show the people themselves, as they are and must be, it will be a great feather in our caps." Fechter read the play, sympathized with the travesty of royalty on the one side and mad democracy on the other, and with his usual daring consented to play "Oscar XXVIII." The next step was to secure a theatre, and they appealed to Moran of the Varietés.

"But you 'll have the theatre down," argued the timid manager.

"Yes, that 's one side of the argument," replied author and actor; "but, on the other hand, you *may* make a great deal of money. Your theatre is closed. Here is an opportunity of turning an ill wind to good account. If you don't seize it, some other theatre will."

Persuaded in spite of himself, Moran consented to the production of "Oscar XXVIII." On the first night none but members of the press were present; nevertheless, Moran could not be found. Anticipating trouble he had left Fechter and Decourcelles to bear the onus of it, instead of which they received the plaudits of a non-paying but appreciative audience.

A few hours acquainted Paris with the nature of the entertainment, and for two months, during the turbulent summer of 1848, "Oscar XXVIII." laughed in the face of the Revolution, and drew crowded audiences of reactionists. Instead of assaults upon the actors,

there were occasional combats among the spectators, at which times Fechter delivered impromptu addresses upon the folly of useless expenditure of force in the presence of a play brought out for the express purpose of putting the people on exhibition. "Only keep the peace and we 'll show you just how it ought to be done," said Fechter; and, taken aback by his audacity and wit, the combatants were wont to sit down and look at their own portraits. Nine months later the burlesque of "Oscar XXVIII." became a positive reality. Decourcelles and Fechter had merely anticipated history.

Later in this year Fechter fulfilled an engagement at the Théâtre Historique, performing Dumas's rhymed tragedy of "Charles VII.," his drama of "Angèle," and bringing out for the first time Dumas and Maquet's "Catilina," and Paul Féval's "Mystères de Londres."

1849 found him again at the Ambigu, during which twelve months he created no less than seven characters of totally different types, the pieces being Fournier's "Pardon de Bretagne," Paul Féval's "Mauvais Cœur," Charles Desnoyer's comedy of "Les Trois Etages," Léon Gozlan's "Jeunesse Dorée," Masson's "Les Fils Aymon," Bourgeois's "Notre Dame de Paris," and Labrousse's "Louis the Fourteenth." In the last, Fechter, in the hero who attempts to save the *Queen*, assumed seven different characters and surprised the audience by his wonderful "make-ups," being especially effective as a cab-driver. When the "Courier of Lyons" was brought out at the Gaieté a year later,

Paulin Menier made an exact copy of Fechter's cab-driver, and gained a success thereby.

1850 and 1851 were equally divided between the Théâtre Historique and the Porte-Saint-Martin. In this time Dumas's "Pauline" and "Corsican Brothers," Bulwer's "Money," Émile Souvestre's "Le Lion et le Moucheron," De Montépin's "Le Vol à la Duchesse," George Sand's "Claudie," and Thiboust's "Le Diable" were first put upon the stage. The "Corsican Brothers" ran for one hundred nights; while "Money," though pronounced a great artistic success, only held the stage forty nights. It was too high comedy for a melodramatic theatre. "Claudie," at the Porte-Saint-Martin, rivalled the "Corsican Brothers" in the length of its popularity, whereby "hangs a tale." When the drama was first read Boccage, to whom belonged the leading rôle, that of an old man, went to Fechter saying, "We can offer you nothing in 'Claudie,' as I have the first part, and no other is good enough for you."

"On the contrary," rejoined Fechter, "I have taken a fancy to the ploughboy."

"What, the third part in the piece?"

"Never mind, we 'll see what can be made of it."

So "Claudie" was mounted, and Madame Sand came from Nohant to assist at the dress rehearsal. At the end of the first act Fechter overheard an excited dialogue between Madame Sand and Boccage in the dressing-room adjoining his own.

"It will kill 'Claudie,'" said Madame Sand. "I will not permit such an outrage. If you allow that man to act I 'll withdraw the play."

"But, my dear madame," retorted Boccage, "you don't know what you are talking about. That man, as you call him, is doing you a great honor. He has taken an inferior part out of compliment to you, and will act it as no one else can. My advice to you is to keep quiet."

But Madame Sand turned a deaf ear to this advice, and with threats upon her lips left Boccage to his own reflections.

"What 's the matter, Boccage?" asked Fechter, as soon as the lady had retired.

"Why, that foolish woman says you sha' n't play in 'Claudie.' She 's made a ploughboy, and is very much disgusted with you because you dress him in peasant's clothes and give him a *patois*."

"Very well," answered Fechter, "then *I* refuse the part. I won't go on with the rehearsal."

"But we are lost if you don't. For my sake, pay no attention to her, and go through your part."

Gradually soothed into complaisance, Fechter put on his street dress, spoke the purest of French, and at the close of the next act Madame Sand exclaimed: "What a charming young man! Why did he not look and act this way before?"

Fechter had made a gentleman of her ploughboy.

"Now," said Fechter, at the conclusion of the rehearsal, "if I can 't do that part as I feel it ought to be done, I won't appear at all. Madame Sand can write, but she has proved that she does n't know the meaning of acting. She has insulted me, and I 've done with her."

Of course much expostulation ensued, and it was finally decided that, Madame Sand to the contrary notwithstanding, Fechter should have his own way, by which he made *the* success of the play. "Take me to him," exclaimed Madame Sand when the curtain fell upon the first night of "Claudie," — "take me to him, that I may know him."

"I refuse to know Madame Sand," was Fechter's answer to this message. "You need not bring her. I do not forget an insult."

Madame Sand did not obtain her introduction; and when she wrote "Mauprat" especially for the man whom she declared would kill "Claudie," the foolishly proud actor refused to accept his part.

The production of "Le Diable" being assigned to Fechter, he designed the dresses, read the play to the actors, superintended the rehearsals, and brought it ont five days after receiving the manuscript. It was at this theatre also that Fechter gave up thirty thousand francs of salary to minor actors who were suffering in consequence of the manager's failure during the engagement of another artist.

The next six years — from 1852 to 1858 — Fechter was the star of the Vaudeville, where ten new plays were produced in which he personated the hero. These creations were Gozlan's "Le Coucher d'une Étoile" and "Louise de Nauteuil," Bayard's "Hortense de Ceruy" and "Les Contes de Boccace," Dumas's "La Dame aux Camélias," Barrière's "Les Filles de Marbre," "La Vie en Rose," and "On Demande un Gouverneur," Scribe's "La Fille de Trente Ans," and

Maquet's "Les Dettes de Cœur." Successful in all, Fechter made a great impression in a very difficult rôle in "Hortense de Ceruy." This, however, was eclipsed by the furore he created in "La Dame aux Camélias." Fechter objected to the fourth act of this play as originally written, and suggested certain changes of situation and dialogue, to which Dumas at first willingly assented, but over which he grew exceedingly nervous as the trial night approached.

"If my play is a failure I'll lay the blame on you," said Dumas to Fechter.

"Nous verrons," responded the actor.

The curtain went up, the curtain went down, and the fourth act was over. "What mean that noise and tremendous applause?" asked Fechter of himself. "Is it a failure? Is it disapprobation?"

"Fechter, Fechter, you have made a sensation; you are called!" And the Vaudeville witnessed an expression of unexampled enthusiasm. The *chef* of the claque came behind the scenes, in great trepidation. "It was n't I!" he cried. "It was not my doing. The people did it, tell the manager. I tried to keep applause back for the last act, but they would have their own way." Dumas hurried to Fechter and clasped him in his arms; while Madame Doche, who had had nothing to do with the sensation of this act, clever as she was in what followed, calmly remarked: "Ah oui. Il m'a bien secondé!"

This play ran for upwards of three hundred nights, and whether Doche, Jeanne Essler, or others personated the heroine, the success, with Fechter as *Armand*,

was equally great. What Dumas thought, all who read may learn: —

"Thanks to Fechter. What can I say of him that all the world does not say and know? Fechter is the most youthful, most ardent, most enthusiastic, most insinuating of artists. What variety of talents, what unpretending skill in conception, what marvellous, thrilling, electric execution! Be it in 'Mauvais Cœur' at the Ambigu, in the 'Corsican Brothers' at the Théâtre Historique, in 'Claudie' at the Porte-Saint-Martin, in 'Hortense de Ceruy' or in 'La Dame aux Camélias' at the Vaudeville, he is always the character *first*; then those happy, unexpected inspirations which are the seal of great artists, which transport an entire audience at once, and invest the character with charms and proportions that the author himself, with all his high ambition, never dreamed of. In 'La Dame aux Camélias' the illusion is complete. It is not an actor playing; it is the man taken in the very act. Fechter has the action, the look, the voice of our inmost emotions, of our most frequent passions. He is himself; he is ourselves. For a drama in which I have endeavored to cause the footlights to disappear and to bring the spectator in direct communication with its characters, for this study in which I have wished that a generation might live over even its errors, where could I have found a surer accomplice than Fechter, young in years, mature in talent? I am happy; it is but my duty to avow it. I seek, I ask in vain: who could have given to *Armand Duval* the convincing poetry, the noble jealousy, the indescribable

susceptibilities of feeling, — the naturalness, the terror — with which he shaded the first three acts? As for the frenzy of the fourth, at the end of which the entire audience rose to cheer and to recall him, — him and Madame Doche, — if I were not so satisfied at having written the piece, I should wish some one else to have been its author that I might say of Fechter all that ought to be said. His heart beat in every part of the theatre. In the fifth act he gave the most piercing cry of which human grief is capable. Happy the brother author who next has Fechter for his hero! Happy I, who, taking my turn in representing the public, shall go to hear him and to clap my hands!"

Did ever actor receive greater praise from dramatist? And well might Dumas applaud, — he who had done all for the heroine, making *Armand* a secondary figure and expecting no more from him than is down in the book! It is cleverness that succeeds in doing well what the author has made pre-eminent; it is genius that carries the author's conception beyond the letter, and makes the less appear the greater. After seeing Fechter in *Armand*, Lemaître went to him, saying: "You are a great fool, my dear fellow. You throw yourself away. You always do justice to every portion of your rôle. Your performance is so even, so good throughout, that the audience does n't appreciate you half as much as it ought. Now take my advice; follow my example. Save yourself for your great points, and the people will be so startled by the strong contrast as to go quite wild. Don't you do anything in *Armand* until the fourth act, and then you 'll see a

hurricane of enthusiasm." But Fechter refused to take Lemaître's advice. He was too true an artist to play for effects; and the great Frederic left him with the final remark that of all fools he was the biggest.

Looking back upon "La Dame aux Camélias," it is interesting to know that, though rehearsed on the stage of the Conservatoire during the Revolution, the moral censors of the Republic would not consent to its production; and not until the days of the Empire did Dumas's masterpiece receive gracious treatment. Count Morny attended the first rehearsal expecting to be greatly shocked. "What fools those Republicans were!" he muttered, and immediately withdrew every objection.

Simultaneously with Scribe's "La Fille de Trente Ans" came Sardou's "Pattes de Mouche." "Which shall we accept?" asked the manager.

"'Pattes de Mouche,' by all means," said Fechter. "It is admirable. Scribe's play will fail, in spite of acting." When Scribe heard the verdict he went to Fechter and upbraided him. "Say no more about it," replied Fechter. "It was policy, not friendship, that prompted my decision. As a friend I will do anything for you, Scribe. Your comedy shall be accepted."

It was produced; it failed. The theatre was saved by a revival of "La Dame aux Camélias;" and Sardou's "Pattes de Mouche" fulfilled Fechter's predictions by running one hundred and fifty nights at the Gymnase.

In "Les Contes de Boccace," a five-act comedy, Fechter sustained no less than nine characters; while in "La Vie en Rose" he became the hero of a lawsuit

as well as of the play. Not having read the piece before its acceptance by the manager, Fechter declared that he would not perform in it unless the last two acts were entirely changed. He would not be connected with another failure. The parts had been given out, the date of production announced, and the manager in despair resorted to law. Law, however, did not produce the desired effect, as the verdict accorded three months' grace to Fechter, after which he was expected to comply with the manager's demands. Fechter asked for no better terms, as it only needed delay to kill the obnoxious play. Completely at Fechter's mercy, the manager went to him, saying, —

"Dictate your own terms. Barrière is down stairs in a hack. He will do anything you please, provided you 'll play in his piece immediately."

"Very well," responded Fechter; "let him alter those two acts as at first suggested, and I 'll rehearse."

Thus, while the company rehearsed the first three acts, Barrière reconstructed the last two, and "La Vie en Rose" had a rose-colored reception from the public.

One night, during the performance of the comedy "On Demande un Gouverneur," Fechter was greatly inconvenienced by talking that proceeded from a stage-box. Nothing so embarrasses or mortifies an artist as this most brutal of insults, and nothing so justifies resentment. Louder and louder grew the noise until, in righteous exasperation, Fechter impulsively flung his cane into the box with such force that it whizzed like a bullet. He then coolly rang a bell, and ordered the

astonished servant to stop the noise and fetch him his cane. A dead silence took possession of the previously boisterous spectators; and a cold shiver passed over the rest of the audience, who saw in this act a speedy challenge, followed by a duel and the possible death of one of the combatants. "Fechter 's done it again," whispered those of his friends who knew his readiness to resent injustice and insult; and Fechter himself was quite prepared for the worst, so that when the card of M. le Comte —— was sent to him in his dressing-room, he expected to be called out.

"Monsieur Fechter," said M. le Comte, upon entering the dressing-room. "I owe you a very humble apology for my conduct. A short time ago I was intoxicated and insulted you unconsciously. Your cane brought me to my senses, and I now come to you for pardon."

Of course Fechter's wrath was quickly appeased, and M. le Comte took his departure with protestations of everlasting friendship upon his lips.

Leaving the Vaudeville Fechter made a successful tour through the provinces, ending with Lyons, where he was to give six representations of "La Dame aux Camélias." Hisses greeted his first appearance, the Lyonnais having given their allegiance to another actor in *Armand*, and being determined to make Lyons thoroughly uncomfortable for Fechter. "Ladies and gentlemen," said Fechter, approaching the footlights, "it makes no possible difference whether you like or dislike me, whether I act or do not act; I merely wish to say that, if I hear another hiss, I shall leave the theatre and never enter it again."

Silenced by this independence the Lyonnais kept their madness in the background, but preserved a discouraging gloom until the end of the fourth act, when Fechter's passion broke down their prejudice, and former enemies became ardent admirers. Before Fechter bade farewell to Lyons his six nights had lengthened into three months.

Returning to Paris Fechter accepted a profitable engagement at the Porte-Saint-Martin, where at the end of ten months, after having appeared in two new parts — in Ségour's "Fils de Nuit," and Maquet's "Belle Gabrielle" — his engagement was cut short by a dangerous attack of typhoid fever which seized him suddenly while acting. Singularly enough he had but just climbed a wall, and been fired upon from below by an actor who was supposed to be pursuing him, when he fell upon the stage as if he had been shot. A short time before, an actor at the same theatre had barely escaped death, owing to the pistol being loaded; and imagining a similar accident, Fechter's fellow-player startled the audience by crying out, "I have killed him!" but afterwards pacified the excited multitude by assuring them there was no wound. For five months Fechter did not leave his bed; nor was he able to resume his profession until seven months later. Overwork had brought on disease, and rest was his only salvation. During the last five months of his stay at the Porte-Saint-Martin he had rehearsed pieces for the Odéon, the management of which he was about to assume. Exhausted Nature took her revenge. Upon recovery Fechter carried out this intention and, before himself

reappearing, mounted "André Gerard" for Frederic Lemaître. He made his *rentrée* in Ponsard's "L'Honneur et l'Argent."

Loving the art of acting quite as much if not more than his own personal advancement, Fechter assumed the management of the Odéon with the intention of producing standard plays in a manner heretofore unknown. Racine, Corneille, Voltaire, Molière, and Beaumarchais were to be humanized for the first time. Rhyme and hexameter were to be given colloquially. History was to be respected in *mise en scène* and costume. Turks were not to sit on French upholstery, nor was imperial Rome to be longer shorn of its splendor of appointments. If the *sociètaires* of the Théâtre Français were content to violate the laws of eternal fitness, at least Fechter aspired to better things. Such audacity filled the *sociètaires* with anger and dismay. "What! a minor theatre dare to produce our pieces, and in a style superior to ourselves? We will show Fechter our superiority."

So when Fechter brought out "Tartuffe," he playing *Tartuffe* for the first time, the same comedy was announced at the Théâtre Français. It would be given three nights a week until the freebooter of the Odéon was sufficiently punished; but the public failed to appreciate this consideration, and the irate *sociètaires* were obliged to withdraw "Tartuffe" after the second night. Not so Fechter. His interpretation of the entire comedy was a revelation to playgoers. Night after night found Meissonnier at the theatre, making sketches of the costumes and scenery. "Il a mis 'Tartuffe'

dans ses meubles," said the journals. Fould, Minister of State, wrote to Fechter, expressing his delight and declaring that he enjoyed it with all the relish of a new play. But Fould was first a servant of the government, then a man; and when the sacred powers of the sacred Théâtre Français demonstrated to him the impropriety of Fechter's poaching upon their ground, Fould requested the withdrawal of "Tartuffe." "No," replied Fechter, "I cannot. A success of thirty nights proves that my efforts in behalf of dramatic art are appreciated by the public. When the sun of 'Tartuffe' sets, that of 'Britannicus' will rise with equal splendor." And he meant what he said. While acting in two new plays, "Le Rocher de Sysiphe" and Emile Augier's "La Jeunesse," "Britannicus," and "Macbeth" were receiving the most elaborate and careful rehearsals. When Fechter closed his first season of nine months, he determined that his reopening should mark an era in dramatic art.

Going to England during the summer of 1860 for the purpose of regaining his health, Fechter received flattering offers from Harris, who had superseded Maddox in the management of the Princess's; but all aglow with the idea of bringing out French and English classics in his own language, he refused to be tempted. Then, going to the Tuileries, he applied to the Emperor for what is called *la liberté des théâtres*, — that is, the right to perform such plays as had heretofore been the exclusive property of the Théâtre Français. Receiving Fechter with cordiality, Napoleon declared that, if his own consent were alone required, the despotic law

should be immediately rescinded. Unfortunately he could only recommend its annulment to the Chamber of Deputies, and this he would do most gladly. For once the Chamber of Deputies failed to agree with their imperial master; and Fechter impulsively bade farewell to the Paris he loved so well, declared he had no intention of devoting his life to melodrama, and crossed over to England. Had he waited patiently his dream would have been realized, for Napoleon never forgot Fechter's request, and two years later brought about the necessary reform. "Come back," said the Emperor; but the battle had been fought and Fechter could not resign his victory. He had conquered a foreign tongue and a foreign audience, and would not leave Shakespeare for Racine.

Understanding English perfectly when spoken, Fechter flattered himself that it would cost little effort to speak it equally well; but the mystified *What?* of the cabman, to whom he gave directions upon arriving in London, convinced the voluntary exile that there was no royal road to Shakespeare. Devoting himself for four months to our stern Anglo-Saxon language, he studied sixteen and eighteen hours out of the twenty-four.

Selecting "Ruy Blas," which had never been acted in English, as less likely to display his deficiencies of pronunciation than a native play, Fechter made his début at the Princess's Theatre on the 27th of October, 1860. The novelty of seeing an eminent French actor translated into English created more than a momentary sensation. The papers were enthusiastic, and *Ruy Blas*

became the hero of a hundred nights. Not yet daring to trust himself with classical language, Fechter's next venture was in the "Corsican Brothers;" after which, feeling more glib with his tongue, he made his comedy entrée on February 11, 1861, in "Don Cæsar de Bazan." Six weeks later, the date being March 20, he first essayed *Hamlet*. It was aiming high, but not higher than he could attain. Courage is the friendly breeze that ever fills the sails of genius; and Fechter, long familiar with Shakespeare, did not feel as if he were undertaking anything new. His conception of *Hamlet* was so thoroughly original that it became the *open-sesame* to conversation in households and clubs. The actor was transformed into a lion, — members of the royal family, the aristocracy and gentry rivalling one another in offers of hospitality.

"Perhaps," wrote Charles Dickens, "no innovation in art was ever accepted with so much favor by so many intellectual persons, precommitted to and pre-occupied by another system, as Mr. Fechter's *Hamlet*." There were those who exclaimed, as they exclaim in America, "C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre," but he had powerful support from the best minds. It was after seeing Fechter in *Hamlet* that Dickens sought an introduction, which took place at a dinner given by Chorley, the musical critic, and which led to a lasting friendship. So great an impression did Fechter make, that "Hamlet" continued running for one hundred and fifteen nights, from the 20th of March until the end of August! For twenty-one nights it was acted six times in the week; but the

strain being too great on Fechter, who felt his text most acutely, it was limited to four nights a week.

"Mr. Fechter," declared that captious critic the *Saturday Review* "is a most logical actor. With all his intention to be original and unfettered, he does not deviate from the prescribed path without warrant from the text, or at any rate, without full conviction that there is nothing in the text that can be opposed to his innovations."

"Mr. Fechter does not act; he *is Hamlet*," asserted the *Athenæum;* while G. H. Lewes, who rarely praised any acting, admitted that Fechter's conception was "fine," "consonant in general with what the text of Shakespeare indicates." In Lewes's book on "Actors and Acting" we read that "Fechter is lymphatic, delicate, handsome; and, with his long flaxen curls, quivering sensitive nostrils, fine eye and sympathetic voice, perfectly represents the graceful *Prince*. His aspect and bearing are such that the eye rests on him with delight. Our sympathies are completely secured."

Taking a vacation of two months, Fechter reappeared, on the 23d of October, in "Othello." Here was another hard nut for the critics to crack, and the war of *pro* and *con* waxed fierce and loud. Fechter's *Othello* was his own, and for forty nights the theatre overflowed with deeply curious and deeply interested audiences.

On the night of his début in the "Moor of Venice" Fechter's acting edition of the tragedy was widely circulated. In his dedication to Richard Lane, Esq., Fechter declared the convictions that were in him.

He avowed his firm belief that Shakespeare's plays were certainly written to be *acted* not *recited*, and that his conclusions were the fruit of nearly twenty years' unceasing labor of love for the *scenic* representation of the Great Master. After expressing his disregard of Tradition, Fechter presented his views of how "Othello" should be acted. Elaborate stage directions supplemented the text and gave a precise idea of the actor's intentions.

These intentions were not received with general favor. "His *Hamlet* was one of the very best and his *Othello* one of the very worst I have ever seen," wrote the uncompromising Lewes. "On leaving the theatre after 'Hamlet,' I felt once more what a great play it was, with all its faults, and they are gross and numerous. On leaving the theatre after 'Othello,' I felt as if all my old admiration for this supreme masterpiece of the art had been an exaggeration."

For years there had been no such excitement over legitimate drama as this Gallic *Othello* created, — an excitement, however, that was cut short by the approach of the pantomime season.[1] Fechter refused to act in conjunction with *Columbine* and *Harlequin*, retired from the theatre, and left Mr. Harris to ruminate on the fallibility of managerial judgment; for, in accordance with Fechter's predictions, the public that had applauded Shakespeare failed to recognize the superiority of his successors.

"Come back," implored Mr. Harris at the close of the third week.

[1] For Press Criticisms, see page 177.

"No, I am not a feather to be blown about at will," replied Fechter. "You said you would run your pantomime ten weeks, and run it you may. When I return, it will be to perform *Iago* and not *Othello*."

Mr. Harris did not love Fechter for thus paying him in his own coin, — human nature never enjoys retorts of this description, — but being helpless, submitted to the actor's terms and gathered a rich harvest in consequence. *Iago* attracted large audiences for several weeks. Then Fechter brought out "The Golden Daggers," a drama taken by himself from Paul Féval's novel of the same name, the scene being laid in Mexico. Admirably as the drama was acted, and beautifully as it was put upon the stage, it failed to be a pecuniary success. A modern story, and perfectly quiet natural acting, disappointed the general public. "There 's no use in going to see that," they said; "it 's just what people do at home."

So "Hamlet" was revived. At this time Fechter received a fine offer from Ullman to visit the United States; but not wishing to leave England during the great Exhibition, when he expected to continue acting at the Princess's, he declined. Then came Harris's revenge. Fechter had dared to dictate to him, and would not perform "Hamlet" more than four nights in the week. London would teem with people; the theatre would be patronized, no matter what the attraction. Fechter should be sacrificed. Going to the generous-hearted Frenchman with a pitiful story of woes, Harris declared that Harrison (the tenor) stood ready to take the theatre off his hands and pay him a handsome

bonus, provided Fechter could be induced to cancel his engagement. Touched in his weakest point, his heart, Fechter consented to withdraw, and on a Saturday morning wrote Mr. Harris to that effect. On the following Monday night Mr. Charles Kean appeared at the Princess's in "Hamlet"! The story about Harrison had been a ruse. "Hamlet" with Kean will take as well as with Fechter, thought Mr. Harris, but again did he reckon without his public. Finding out the mistake, Mr. Kean conveniently managed to turn his foot on this first night, and did not appear for a fortnight, when "Hamlet" was quietly ignored. Once more did the manager beg Fechter to return, and once more did he refuse.

This scurvy trick was most unfortunate for Fechter, as it prevented him from acting during the Exhibition, — a consummation he had devoutly wished. Weary of managerial chicanery, he became lessee of the Lyceum, which opened on the 10th of January, 1863, with "The Duke's Motto." For seven months this drama drew great houses, until Fechter, satiated with *Henri de Lagardère*, dropped it in the full tide of success. Reopening with "Bel Demonio" on the 15th of October, this highly colored drama bade fair to rival "The Duke's Motto" in popularity, when Fechter's evil genius stepped between him and fortune. On the one hundred and seventy-fifth night Fechter, in making his entrance through a window, caught his spur in the sill, and fell so violently as to drive the hook of his scabbard through his right hand. Ready to faint with pain, he yet went through the scene, and even finished

the play, not realizing how dangerous a wound he had received. Arising the next morning with the intention of acting, his physician found him shaving himself.

"You had better go back to bed," said the doctor.

"O no, I shall act to-night."

"Indeed! we 'll see about that. Do you feel anything queer about the jaws?"

"No."

"Well, keep very quiet. I 'll return in a few hours."

Return he did, and, as he expected, found Fechter in bed, but fortunately with no symptoms of lockjaw. The exhausted actor and manager lay for three weeks in a state of stupor, rarely conscious, saving when food was administered. Escaping the terrible death of lockjaw, he went to the Isle of Wight, where he gained strength so rapidly as to venture to act "Bel Demonio" for the benefit of the sufferers from the Sheffield inundation. In acknowledging the generous donation of two hundred and three pounds, the entire receipts, the Mayor of Sheffield offered to return eighty pounds, the fund having reached the sum necessary to meet the most desperate cases. "Give the rest to the poor," Fechter replied.

The night following this benefit Fechter broke down, and three more weeks passed before he was able to resume his profession. Such contretemps were not likely to advance the interests of a theatre of which he was the pecuniary attraction; and the Shakespeare tercentenary celebration being announced for April 23, 1864, Fechter determined to bring out "Hamlet" with every possible effect. His orders were not ful-

filled until a fortnight later, and the indignant manager indulged in the luxury of a lawsuit. "Hamlet" then ran forty nights.

The autumn season of 1864 opened with Paul Meurice's comedy-drama of "The King's Butterfly." Splendidly gotten up, and introducing Fechter's favorite blood-mare Minerva, who understood French and English equally well, — knew almost as much as her namesake, and acted in a wonderfully human way, — the new sensation endured three or four months, when it was withdrawn to make way for "The Mountebank," which was no more nor less than "Belphegor" entirely rewritten by Charles Dickens, with a child's part introduced to display the great dramatic ability of Fechter's son Paul, then a child of seven. The counterpart of his father in appearance, — it was like seeing him through the small end of an opera-glass, — the lad astonished everybody by his acting. On the first night he brought tears into the eyes of the old artists around him, and introduced bits of "business" that amazed even his father; but Paul soon tired of the many repetitions and, being a pet with the ladies, found it much more interesting to play to the boxes, and be showered with bonbons, than to lose himself in his part.[1]

"How can you smile at those women when the situations are so tragic?" asked the father in despair.

[1] On November 29, 1847, Fechter married M'lle Roebert, a most estimable woman and a pensionnaire of the Comédie Française. The offspring of this marriage were a son Paul and a daughter Marie. The former is studying for the law. The latter is an operatic singer.

"Well, but father, you don't really die, you know. It isn't true. It's only make-believe. We all come home alive and enjoy ourselves, so where's the harm?"

Fechter saw that the stage would be Paul's ruin, and, regardless of pecuniary loss, withdrew the drama, bringing out "The Roadside Inn," a new version of "Robert Macaire." This novel rendering of an old friend drew immense houses for three months, and might have continued indefinitely but for the Prince of Wales's desire to witness a performance of "Ruy Blas."

"If I comply with your request, I'll surely ruin the future of 'The Roadside Inn,'" said Fechter.

"Not if you give 'Ruy Blas' on a Saturday night and by royal command," argued the Prince.

Very doubtful as to consequences, Fechter complied. The papers waxed furious at the idea of royalty leaving native talent unhonored, and commanding a performance at the theatre of what they were pleased to call "a French importation." The treasury took two hundred and thirty pounds, ten pounds more than the theatre held, and enthusiasm ran riot. But alas for "The Roadside Inn"! The next Monday's receipts drooped to seventy pounds, and the previously successful drama fell into a rapid decline. The public is a queer monster, far queerer than his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales ever dreamed, and the only sop Fechter could throw to it was "Ruy Blas." Victor Hugo reigned until the close of the summer season of 1865.

Fifteen years ago the Lyceum was not a theatre adapted to the legitimate drama. When Fechter assumed its management he did so as a *pis aller;* and, while earnestly longing to produce other Shakespearian plays, he found himself hedged in by fate. He thought in prose what no less a man than Garrick had written in verse: —

> "If an empty house, the actor's curse,
> Shows us our *Lears* and *Hamlets* lose their force,
> Unwilling we must change the nobler scene,
> And in our turn present you *Harlequin*, —
> Quit poets and set carpenters to work,
> Show gaudy scenes, or mount the vaulting Turk;
> For though we actors one and all agree
> Boldly to struggle for our — vanity,
> If want comes in, misfortune must retreat;
> Our first great ruling passion is — to eat!"

With this idea of eating in view, Fechter began the autumn of 1865 with "The Watch-Cry," a drama in three acts, founded on the story of the three brothers Salviati. It held up its head quite firmly for two months; but as Fechter represented a dumb man, and confined his language to that of pantomime, the people declared that he did not talk enough. "We want to hear as well as see him." Wishing to gratify this amiable desire Fechter produced "The Master of Ravenswood," on December 23, 1865, and made so deep an impression in the romantic *Edgar* that he played nothing else for the remainder of the season.

September, 1866, saw Fechter personating *Hamlet* for two weeks. Going from one extreme to the other

he revived "The Corsican Brothers," which attracted excellent audiences for one month. Then came Fechter's own drama of "Rouge et Noir," founded on "Thirty Years of a Gambler's Life." It was pronounced good work, and lived luxuriously for one hundred and fifty nights.

Feeling himself utterly incompetent to circumvent the harpies who fattened upon his treasury, Fechter determined to retire from the lesseeship of the Lyceum, and henceforth confine himself to his proper sphere of acting and stage direction. Behind the scenes Fechter was a master; before them he was, like most artists, a child. Wishing to close his theatre with éclat he produced "The Lady of Lyons," and created so great a furore in *Claude Melnotte* as to astonish even Bulwer. It ran seventy nights, the curtain falling last upon it on November 16, 1867. Then followed the great success at the Adelphi of "No Thoroughfare," dramatized by Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Fechter, and acted one hundred and fifty-one times. Fechter's powerful rendering of *Obenreizer* made the drama; and no sooner was it withdrawn than he went to Paris with Dickens to superintend the rehearsals of its French adaptation, "L'Abîme." Returning to the Adelphi, Fechter won double laurels for one hundred nights in his clever drama of "Monte Cristo," after which he appeared in "Black and White," the joint work of himself and Wilkie Collins.

Not having visited the provinces since 1865, when his circuit had been limited to Glasgow, Birmingham, and Liverpool, Fechter gave eight months of 1869 to a

tour through Great Britain and Ireland. Even Liverpool acknowledged his power. This city is not greatly given to legitimate drama; nevertheless Liverpool wanted to see Fechter in "Hamlet." "Very well," said Fechter, "'Black and White' cannot be withdrawn, because it is filling the theatre; but if you like I will give you one act of 'Hamlet' every night until finished, and you shall have it after the drama."

The Liverpudlians readily assented to this arrangement, and, putting all his intensity into each act, Fechter never acted *Hamlet* as equally as on those five nights. Liverpool was an easy conquest, but not so Manchester. This good town had a grievance. Years before, Manchester had commanded, had petitioned, had finally implored Fechter to come to them, but it was not until this season that he was able to respond to the prayer. Then Manchester arose in all her might to resent a prolonged absence, which she chose to consider a slight. The world may think what it pleases of London as the heart and head of Great Britain, but Manchester has opinions of its own, pre-eminent among which is the religious conviction that Manchester is the centre of the solar system. Consequently, when Fechter did appear at the Theatre Royal, it became incumbent upon a club clique to punish him for his previous indifference. So the clique decided that Fechter should play to empty benches until the production of "Hamlet," when the entire solar system should shine upon the star. Feeling the injustice of such treatment, and determined to preserve his personal as well as professional dignity, Fechter held the

cards in his own hands and won the game. Playing to audiences of three and four hundred, he never acted better in his life. For those who did come to see him he felt that he owed all that he could give; for those who childishly attempted to humiliate him he inserted a card at the head of the play-bills, in which Mr. Fechter took great pleasure in announcing that his engagement would not be prolonged after the performances of "Ruy Blas" and "Black and White"! He was as good as his word, and the clubs of Manchester discovered that for once they had found their match.

Accepting an offer to visit the United States, Fechter hurried back to London, and, after fourteen farewell performances at the Princess's of "Ruy Blas," "Lady of Lyons," and "Hamlet," set sail for America. "Come back soon," said the Prince of Wales on that last of farewell nights. "Remember that we cannot get on without you." Well might royalty confess as much, for it will be long ere England salutes the peer of that "French importation," Charles Albert Fechter.

FECHTER IN THE UNITED STATES.

1870–1879.

"*My fame is a mere ephemeron, at the command of caprice. The same breath that nourishes the flame to-day, puts it out to-morrow.*"

EDMUND KEAN.

FECHTER IN THE UNITED STATES.

TWELVE years have passed since Charles Albert Fechter, unheralded save by a few words of praise from the pen of that best of dramatic critics, Charles Dickens, made his début in New York. He came, he was heard, he conquered. An eager public assembled in Niblo's Garden on the 10th of January, 1870, to witness "Ruy Blas." The effect produced was identical with that produced in London and recorded in the *Times*, on Fechter's first appearance as an English actor: —

"As to the manner in which M. Fechter would speak English the mind of the audience was soon at ease, and there is that music in his voice which would sound equally well through the medium of any language. *Ruy's* narrative of his sufferings and his love, and the small delicate touches by which he indicated his uneasiness under a master's control, carried him well through the first act, and though the great scenes of the piece were yet to come, it was easy to foresee that the manner of their execution would be in every way satisfactory. The second act was an immense advance on the first. Nothing could be finer of its kind than *Ruy's* declaration of love to the *Queen*, so exquisitely

was the fire of passion tempered by the feeling of respectful devotion, and with such eloquence of words and action was the text poured forth. There are not many actors who succeed even in ordinary love-scenes; and few indeed could effect an exhibition of that idolatrous form of passion which inspired so many poets of the chivalric ages. The misery to which the virtuous impostor is exposed when his master suddenly reappears and compels him to do petty menial offices while he is still in the plenitude of his power, — the terribly jarring conflict between the aspiring mind of the statesman and the bounden condition of the lackey, — was represented with wondrous force and abundance of detail. But it was in the last act that the triumph of the actor reached its culminating point, — the act in which the valet appears as the defender of the *Queen* against the machinations of his villainous master. The concentration of passionate rage with which he accosted his oppressor, the obvious feeling that he was throwing from his soul a burden that had long crushed it to the dust, elicited that continued succession of plaudits which is only heard when an audience is excited in the highest degree. From the moment when *Ruy* snatches the sword from his master's side (an action which of itself produced an electrical effect) to the fall of the curtain, when the valet dies happy in the conviction that he is loved not under false colors, but with the livery actually present to the mind's eye of his royal mistress, M. Fechter had the audience completely in his grasp and could do with them as he pleased. The shouts which invited him to the front of the curtain

were the certain indications of an unequivocal and brilliant success."

To me this Anglo-Franco-Piemontese-Teuton was a revelation. I had been, from childhood, under the influence of the natural school of acting. The exquisite comedy of the Théâtre Français, the grandeur and force of Ristori and Salvini, the incomparable humor of Charles Dickens the reader, had been a liberal education in dramatic art. I wondered if I should ever see upon the stage such a lover as Garrick and Barry are said to have been. It seemed to me twelve years ago, and it seems to me in the present year of our Lord, that he is the finest actor who best depicts the noblest of all passions. "O Art, my art, thou art much!" exclaims Aurora Leigh, "but love is more! Art symbolizes heaven; but God is Love and means Heaven." If love be the divine passion, the delineation of love should be the actor's highest aspiration. To attain his ideal should be the actor's crowning glory. When Charles Fechter as *Ruy Blas* uttered those five small words, "I madly love the queen;" when he dared to exclaim before *Don Cæsar*, "I love her, that 's all!" when, dying, he gazed upon his sovereign for the last time, throwing into his face an expression absolutely marvellous in beauty and pathos, I felt that the delineation of love could no further go.

Fechter's appearance in "The Duke's Motto," on January 26, confirmed the public in their enthusiastic admiration. The dual parts of *Henri de Lagardère* and *Æsop the Hunchback* were so thrillingly portrayed as to make the illusion complete. The actor lived in his

assumptions, and proved the justice of John Weiss's criticism : —

" When I saw that great genius, Fechter, before he had spoken a word I felt he was the man he was to stand for, and from that time every word and movement was but added proof to my feeling. I had to tear myself away from the man he stood for when I would think of the man he was ; and I doubt not, if I could have seen the working of his nature within, I should have found that he was not himself in that hour, but the embodiment of the poet's conception."

Successful in the romantic drama, Fechter, on the 14th of February, played *Hamlet*, a character about which every critic, every confirmed play-goer, and every Shakespearian reader has a preconceived opinion. That he produced a sensation is unquestioned ; that his conception was severely criticised is equally true. It was not until he appeared at the Boston Theatre, on February 21, that Fechter received such recognition in " Hamlet " as England had given him. Boston took the new actor to its inmost heart. The enthusiasm excited by his interpretation of Shakespeare increased with representations of " Ruy Blas " and " The Lady of Lyons," and the farewell matinée of Bulwer's play was such an ovation as I have never seen equalled in any country. Gray-headed men shouted with delight at the close of the fourth act. Not content with the frantic waving of handkerchiefs, women took off their hats and bonnets, and performed strange gymnastics with them. Again and again were Fechter and his excellent assistant, Miss Carlotta Leclercq, called before

the curtain, and applause only ended when physical exhaustion set in.

People were Fechter mad. No dinner was complete without him. The man fascinated as much as the actor. He possessed the animal magnetism with which great actors and orators are generally endowed.

After visiting Philadelphia professionally, Fechter returned to the Boston Theatre and, on the 20th of March, opened in "The Duke's Motto" with all his previous success. "No Thoroughfare" followed.

> "Who wrote 'No Thoroughfare'?
> Surely not Boz.
> Collins it was, —
> He wrote 'No Thoroughfare.'"

During his visit to this country, Dickens took up a copy of the last of the "Christmas Stories," and marked with a pencil such portions as were his own. The book thus marked, which would be highly valued now, was by some ill luck mislaid, but the clever man of letters, to whom it belonged, declares the proportion of Dickens to Collins to have been exceedingly small. "No Thoroughfare" will never be known to posterity as other than a child of Wilkie Collins's brain, as like its father as a child can be that has been fed on Dickens. To say what portions of "No Thoroughfare" Dickens actually wrote would be presumptuous; but it is probable that after talking over the plot together, — a plot that is pre-eminently Collinsish, — Dickens started the story, conceived the character of *Joey Ladle*, and, with a touch here and there, left the rest to his collaborateur. "Gentlemen, it is all wery well for you, that has been accustomed to

take your wine into your systems by the convivial channel of your throttles, to put a lively face upon it; but I have been accustomed to take *my* wine in at the pores of the skin, and, took that way, it acts different. It acts depressing. It 's one thing to charge your glasses in a dining-room with a Hip Hurrah and Jolly Companions Every One, and it 's another thing to be charged yourself, through the pores, in a low, dark cellar and a mouldy atmosphere. It makes all the difference betwixt bubbles and wapors. I 've been a cellarman my life through, with my mind fully given to the business. What 's the consequence? I 'm as muddled a man as lives — you won't find a muddleder man than me — nor yet you won't find my equal in mollancholly. Sing of Filling the bumper fair, Every drop you sprinkle O'er the brow of care Smooths away a wrinkle? Yes. P'r'aps so. But try filling yourself through the pores, under ground, when you don't want it." If Dickens did not originate *Joey Ladle* and his quaint conceit, Dickens never originated anything. Successful as a story, "No Thoroughfare" was no less successful when, dramatized in 1867, it was brought out by Fechter at the Adelphi, in London, and acted one hundred and fifty-one times. It was only withdrawn in England to be produced in Paris under the name of "L'Abîme," the French adaptation being Fechter's, and the rehearsals being superintended by Dickens and himself.

With such prestige, the announcement of the production of this drama furnished tea-tables with no small amount of gossip. Boston's first and last fami-

lies and Boston's brains were at this *première*. All the cultivated clever women, whose society makes this city so exceptional, were there. There sat Longfellow, looking like an intellectual "King Lear," editors whose hands were oftenest the first to start applause, James T. Fields, and many another. And the drama itself? It is clever. Though the first performance dragged its slow length along to the witching hour of twelve, few left the theatre. This is the greatest compliment Boston can offer an artist, as the suburban population, tied to inflexible trains and horse-cars, generally get up and walk out in agonizing ignorance of dénouements. There are those who have never seen the last act of anything, and await a future existence before they shall be able to finish their uncompleted lives. Apart from the prologue, which can never be interesting, as no interesting characters appear in it, and apart from bits of scenes for subordinate characters that must always bore more or less, for the reason that little parts are rarely well played — "No Thoroughfare" commands constant attention. Of course, it is sensational. Wilkie Collins never wrote anything that was not highly so, and the drama is a condensation rather than a dilution of the story, altered by Fechter in several important respects to meet the requirements of the stage.

In delineating *Obenreizer*, a passionate villain, Fechter gave one more proof of his great versatility. His easy colloquial acting in the beginning was delightful, and in the fourth tableau he was masterly. His quick transitions from repose to action, at one moment giv-

ing advice, at another stealthily endeavoring to gain possession of the receipt; his equally stealthy attempt to overcome *Vendale*, thwarted by the entrance of *Joey Ladle;* his relapse into the old familiar manner, and final urging of *Vendale* to go himself to Switzerland and bear him (*Obenreizer*) company, who, strangely enough, is forced to make the same journey; his inviting *Vendale* to dine, that they may start together and he see *Marguerite*, — were phases as marvellous in combination as the changes of the kaleidoscope.

When, in the fifth tableau, *Obenreizer* returns after the drug has taken effect, his cat-like approach to the bed in search of the forged receipt; his terror upon discovering that *Vendale* sleeps in the chair by the fire; *Vendale's* momentary return to consciousness, and the story upon *Obenreizer's* lips that he has had a bad dream about his friend that caused his return; *Vendale's* invitation to remain; *Obenreizer's* inclination to kill *Vendale* while asleep; his feeling for the receipt in *Vendale's* pocket, and the unexpected appearance of a guide rapping out four o'clock, the hour of starting over the Alps, just as he is about to seize the receipt, were all so thrilling in pantomime as to make the spectator watch the scene with bated breath, believing it to be real.

The seventh and last tableau showed Fechter at his best in the exquisite pathos of action and expression, as *Obenreizer*, dying of despair and nervous exhaustion, looked upon the woman he loved.

"No Thoroughfare" was succeeded by "Don Cæsar de Bazan" and "Ruy Blas." The universal favorite bade farewell for the season on April 16, when he acted in French for the benefit of the French Comedy Company that sorely needed financial help. No one was readier than he to give his services to a worthy cause.

Again in New York, Fechter played an engagement at the French Theatre (now Haverly's Fourteenth Street Theatre) which lasted from April 27 to May 23, during which time "The Lady of Lyons," "Don Cæsar de Bazan," "Ruy Blas," "Hamlet" and "The Corsican Brothers" were produced. In New York Fechter was admired, in Boston he founded a religion. Small blame to him then for preferring the Modern Athens. He dreamed of what might be done for dramatic art in the town which he said should hereafter be his home. He found a loving friend and disciple in Arthur Cheney, proprietor of a new theatre, the management of which Fechter accepted with enthusiasm. He would give up starring; no one better appreciated the evils of a system which abolishes stock companies. He, Fechter, would prove theories by example, and the land of his adoption should have a school of acting the influence of which would be universal. It was delightful to hear Fechter talk on dramatic art, of which he was master, and it was no less delightful to witness Arthur Cheney's eagerness to carry out Fechter's plans. All Boston was alive with excitement. A new dramatic era was about to dawn.

First came the naming of the theatre. The amount

of brains required in this matter is only known to such as have attempted to christen a book, a play, a boat, or a patent.

"Master Field, the player," writes Taylor the water-poet, "riding up Fleet Street at a great pace, a gentleman called him, and asked him what play was played that day. He being angry to be staied on so frivolous a demand, answered that he might see what play was plaied *upon every poste.* 'I cry you mercy,' said the gentleman, 'I tooke you for a *poste*, you rode so fast.'" This Master Field, otherwise Nat Field, one of the earliest dramatists, little dreamed that two hundred and seventy years after Shakespeare, himself, and comrades had strutted their brief hours upon the stage of that Globe which may be called the mother of English theatres, a new world would seek, by the resurrection of a name, to link itself with an illustrious past. Yet this came about in the baptism of Fechter's theatre, the curtain of which rose September 12, 1870, upon the plot and passion of "Monte Cristo." It was a glad night for Boston. Our fathers had grown garrulous over the palmy days of the drama. What would they say to a stock company including Fechter, James W. Wallack, C. H. Vandenhoff, G. H. Griffiths, W. J. Lemoyne, the brothers Leclercq, H. F. Daly, Miss Carlotta Leclercq, Mrs. Chanfrau, Mrs. Melinda Jones, Miss Mary Cary, and a score of lesser though most useful lights? A king among pygmies is a sorry sight. To be king among princes is the only ambition worthy of genius. The Drama was to be cared for irrespective of individual actors. The system of starring was to be

abolished. The motto of the Globe was to be "Equality and Fraternity." There was to be a constant succession of new works, in which the honors of performance were to be equally divided, and Victorien Sardou was to be asked to write specially for the new theatre.

Boston thought the millennium in art had come. Alas, Boston reckoned without its master of revels. I wish it were not necessary to show other than the bright side of Fechter's career, but the truth must be told. Boston's dreams, Arthur Cheney's dreams, of a model theatre, were to vanish into thin air. There were dissensions, misunderstandings, from the beginning, all of which might have been avoided had Fechter been a reasonable man of business instead of an undisciplined genius. There was a twist in Fechter's mind that no human being could make straight by argument or any other means. Personally I never held him responsible for either words or deeds. His blood was too hot for reason. His father possessed an ungovernable temper, aggravated by drink, which he bequeathed to his brilliant son. No one was ever less fitted to command, for the reason that he had never learned to command himself.

Poor Arthur Cheney's life was not a bed of roses. Devoted to Fechter, anxious for the success of his own theatre, he saw with dismay a storm arise between Fechter and Wallack, the story of which is told by the combatants in the following correspondence relating to the part of *Don Salluste*, for which Wallack had been cast by his manager, Fechter: —

"My Dear Fechter, — I have received the play, and do not like the part of *Don Salluste* at all. I would rather not play it.

Yours truly,

J. W. Wallack."

"My Dear Wallack, — I sent you the part of *Don Salluste* to study, not to judge. I should as soon think of asking your permission to cast you as *Joseph Surface* as *Don Salluste*. I beg of you to reconsider your note and accept the part, or your services will be useless here, and your engagement at an end this very week. I consider *Don Salluste* the best part in the play, and would much rather act it than *Ruy Blas*. If you say so we will alternate the part .... And I am, my dear Wallack,

Yours truly,

Charles Fechter."

"Sir, — I consider that no other prefix is necessary after your letter of this date .... I shall have no further correspondence with you in relation to my engagement at the Globe, as I in no way recognize your right to interfere. Mr. Cheney is the sole party to whom I am engaged and to whom I shall look for fulfilment of the business contract made. Had you adhered to the agreement as understood by us, or had you intended to keep your word as given in the presence of Mr. Cheney, this need not have occurred. As it is, I decline further correspondence of any nature with you. Yours,

J. W. Wallack."

Surely so serious a tempest never arose in so small a teapot. But, with all Fechter's irritability of temper, he certainly had the right of it in casting Wallack for *Don Salluste;* and why that usually sensible actor refused the part is beyond present comprehension.

Like a shuttlecock Arthur Cheney was tossed from one battledoor to the other, reporters from all over the country interviewed both actors, and great was the scandal thereof.

"The difficulty with Fechter," said Wallack to a journalist, "is that he does n't understand men, and especially me. He 's too high and mighty. All he had to do was to slap me on the back and say 'Here Jim, let's take a drink; I dare say we are both wrong,' and I would have given in at once. Instead of that, he gets his back up, won't play at all, and puts the management in a hole." When this same journalist called on Fechter, the actor-manager said, "Nobody can manage Wallack but myself. I can't manage him in this matter at all. All he had to do was to ask me to take a glass of wine and arrange it amicably, but he is so stubborn. He 's like a mule, my dear boy; and so I wait till he is ready to make the advance, for after all I am in the right." It is said that in less than an hour the two actors met at the house of this common friend, and both laughed heartily when their host narrated his experience with each of them. Actors have been called children of a larger growth. Were there ever greater proofs thereof than are found in this episode? At last there came the climax; and on December 14, 1870, Fechter, in an injudicious letter addressed

to the editor of the *Boston Traveller*, unveiled the secrets of the coulisses. He therein declared his intention of resigning the management of the Globe Theatre, "notwithstanding the prayers of and his sincere affection for his friend Cheney." The story Fechter then told need not be repeated. Quarrels die as well as people. The truth lay in the fact that Fechter was the right man in the wrong place. It is no more than just, however, to Fechter to reaffirm his statement that "in assuming management, at a great pecuniary loss, he had no other views than the benefit of art, the wholesome amusement of the public, and the pride and comfort of his hearty friend Cheney." Fechter was always indifferent to money; he spent it as fast as he made it. He held Boston in high esteem, — and well he might, as there he found his best friends and warmest appreciators. He truly longed to advance dramatic art. He did not know himself.

Boston's millennium was brief. After holding the stage for twelve weeks, "Monte Cristo" made way for "Hamlet," "Lady of Lyons," "Ruy Blas" and "Don Cæsar de Bazan;" and on December 26 Fechter produced for the first time in this country the drama of "Black and White," written by Wilkie Collins and himself. The public were greatly impressed by Fechter's acting, and liked the drama; but on January 14, 1871, Fechter trod the stage of the Globe Theatre for the last time. The occasion was made a testimonial benefit to himself, at which he appeared as *Ruy Blas*, — Miss Carlotta Leclercq playing "A Sheep In Wolf's Clothing" as an afterpiece.

From this point Fechter's downfall begins. The unhappy temper that wrecked the fortunes of the Globe Theatre lost none of its malign influence on being transplanted to New York. Fechter believed that his dream of a theatre might be realized in the metropolis. The capitalist was found; the French Theatre was selected. Certainly Fechter showed his fine knowledge of theatrical requirements, both before and behind the footlights, in the changes which were made under his direction; but the day of misunderstandings set in, and the Lyceum, named after Fechter's London theatre, never knew its creator as manager.

Returning to Europe for a few months in 1872, Fechter reappeared at the Adelphi, London, in March; when, according to the *Times*, "he was heartily greeted by a numerous and expectant audience, who burst into one unanimous shout of welcome as soon as he became visible on the stage." The drama was "Ruy Blas," in which Fechter exercised all his old charm, — the *Times* declaring that "devotional love, which is the life and soul of so many poems and romances, is expressed by Mr. Fechter with an intensity which is peculiarly his own."

Fechter's next appearance in New York was on April 28, 1873, as *Monte Cristo*, at the Grand Opera House. This drama was followed on June 1 by "The Corsican Brothers," and on June 9 by "Ruy Blas," which was played a week. On December 11 of the same year, Fechter began an engagement at what was to have been his own theatre, the Lyceum. The doors suddenly closed after nine nights of "The Lady of

Lyons." It was pathetic to watch the decadence in popularity of a great actor, a decadence due to the faults of the man.

Four months later, on April 13, 1874, Fechter opened the Park Theater on Broadway, near Twenty-second Street, under William Stuart's management. The attraction was "Love's Penance," a play in three acts, and a prologue adapted by himself from "Le Médecin des Enfants." The first night's audience knew what acting meant, and gave to Fechter the enthusiastic approbation he deserved.

After? The sequel is told by William Winter, in the *Tribune:* "The play was too long and too sombre, but Fechter never acted better; and in a more artistic community the actor would have saved the piece, and put money in the manager's purse. But New York was not Paris. Personally Fechter had ceased to be popular, through no one's fault but his own, I grieve to admit; and after twenty-three performances, 'Love's Penance' was withdrawn." Here is the story, in five words: *New York was not Paris.* Paris, as a rule, recognizes art, irrespective of individuals; New York looks at art through personality. Fechter ignored or quarrelled with those upon whom his success depended. It was pitiful.

Karl in "Love's Penance" was Fechter's last creation. From this time forward he was content with the repertoire that had made him famous. In some towns, especially Boston, he exercised all his old power; in others, he was not appreciated. In 1876 Fechter fell upon the ice, and broke his leg. This misfortune made him physically infirm, and cast additional gloom upon

his career. The end was not long in coming. Appearing in public by flashes, Fechter sought seclusion on his farm, which he bought in July, 1873, having always declared that the farmer was the happiest and most independent of men. To begin a career in Paris, and to end it in the little village of Rockland Centre, Bucks County, three miles from Quakertown, and two hours from Philadelphia by the North Pennsylvania Railroad, is as strange a contrast as can well befall mortal. In an old unpretentious country-house, a few feet from the highway, the ideal stage-lover passed the greater part of the last three years of his life. The farm consisted of fifty-seven acres. Fechter's summer sitting-room was hung with fire-arms; for he delighted in field-sports, and was as fine a shot as he was a fencer. Dickens did not love dogs more dearly. Five of these noble brutes shared the actor's room and table. They were his companions in all his excursions, saving when he wielded the fishing-rod, with which he was very skilful.

Nature could not restore Fechter to health. For years — ever after the attack of typhoid fever in Paris — his digestive organs were greatly impaired; and it was not unusual for his stomach to be distended with gas like a drum, causing great suffering, and rendering clothing insupportable. Yet in this condition he enchanted many an audience! Imagination triumphs over matter. But matter has its revenge in the end. Fechter disappointed the public again and again, — the public taking their revenge by attributing his non-appearance to dissipation. He was on the road to the grave. The

spring of 1879 found him in precarious health, and bad became worse as summer appoached. The malady being of the liver and digestive organs, Fechter's agony was intense. At last Fechter was confined to the house, and, gradually sinking into a stupor, died at six o'clock on the morning of Aug. 5, 1879.

Had Fechter been as complete a man as he was an actor, his death would have been a calamity. Accepting facts, his best friends realized that he passed away none too soon for his reputation. Months previous, he had in his own mind bade farewell to the stage. When, on his last visit to New York, he consulted physicians concerning his disease, Fechter exclaimed mournfully, after witnessing a dramatic performance: "Poor ——! he little knows how his fat stomach affects his cavaliership; but in his ludicrousness, I read my own fate. I am done with the stage forever." Friends laughed; whereupon he grew eloquent on the necessity of physical fitness to artistic success. Love was opposed to obesity, and he would renounce *Ruy Blas* before *Ruy Blas* renounced him. Is it not pathetic that an actor's brains should not weigh in the balance against an actor's paunch? *Romeo* may be divine, yet if *Romeo* be fat, the world wants him not.

He who lives in the glare of the footlights is doomed to have his failings proclaimed from the housetops. Human nature is prone to believe the worst, and attributed Fechter's death to drink. On being told that report gave credence to such a belief, Fechter's physician replied, after a post-mortem examination: "There

is nothing to indicate such a condition. I do not believe that he has been a drinking man of late. We had great difficulty in getting him to swallow stimulants to keep up his strength. He refused at first. He was conscious until nearly the last, and suffered very much. I don't believe his illness was brought on by the use of liquor."

Followed by one or two intimate friends and a few acquaintances, Charles Fechter's remains were on August 8 placed in the receiving vault of Mt. Vernon Cemetery, Philadelphia. On the 20th of June, 1880, they were laid in the grave. Fechter's monument, representing a bust of the actor with bay leaves and laurel carved around it, bears the inscription, "Genius has taken its flight to God." In taking that flight, the soul has found the light that genius failed to give.

Those of us who believe in Fechter's greatness do not care to remember the blots on the escutcheon. He was a benefactor in dramatic art. Let that fact suffice. Personally he could be delightful, and I owe to him hours upon hours of instruction as well as of entertainment. He believed in the stage, and no one was ever more lucid or fluent in its exposition. He was not one to brook contradiction, however, and I should have sooner thought of playing *Hamlet* than of opposing his pet opinions. Like Landor he possessed "a proud complacency and scornful strength," a resentful impatience; like Landor he was choleric. Like Landor he had that to impart which was worth learning. In Dickens's household the master was called "Mr. Always Right," while his friend Fechter received

the sobriquet of "Mr. Never Wrong." Here was the rock which wrecked a noble career. *Faiblesse vaut vice* was his life-long motto; it was his inherited curse. If nature has endowed us with less waywardness and more self-control than fell to the lot of Charles Fechter, the more reason have we to thank God and to encircle with charity the memory of an unhappy genius.

"Rest, perturbed spirit."

FECHTER'S "HAMLET."

FECHTER'S "HAMLET."

Of all Fechter's repertoire given in this country, *Hamlet* was the only character that fully called out his resources; and, whether or not his conception be acknowledged as Shakespeare's, he strangely moved his audiences. Who, however, is presumptuous enough to proclaim Shakespeare's conception of "Hamlet"? From Voltaire, who declared "Hamlet" to be the work of a drunken savage, to Goethe, who would have made innumerable changes in the plot, — from Coleridge to our own brilliant Lowell, — "there has been much throwing about of brains." That Shakespeare has not "revisited the glimpses of the moon" to tell us what he does mean, is strong evidence against the theory of modern Spiritualism. Never have written words, the Bible excepted, inspired a like amount of controversy; and as Catholic and Protestant, Episcopalian and Radical, Presbyterian and Unitarian, find their creeds in the Testaments, so do critics find authority for their various dogmas concerning "Hamlet." While no two entirely sympathize, shall the right of private judgment be abolished? and because a great actor disagrees with certain great writers, shall he be crucified and told that his is not *Shakespeare's Hamlet?* It is

an easy criticism to make, — Shakespeare being "safely stowed," and no contradiction possible. It is so cheap as to fall first from the lips of those who have never given "Hamlet" a thought, and are, therefore, quite prepared to pass judgment.

"It is n't Shakespeare's *Hamlet*," exclaimed an illiterate man who sat behind me at the theatre one night. "It is n't right, you know. He does n't give you the proper accents. It 's a foreigner's interpretation."

"Well, but — *Hamlet*'s a foreigner, is n't he?" asked a timid little woman, in a timid little voice.

"Yes," responded the critic, with a somewhat puzzled expression of face, "he 's a foreigner, he 's a foreigner, but," and then exultation broke through the trouble, — "but *you see it 's an English play!*"

Argument ceased. Everybody was carried away by the illiterate man's superior intelligence. Nevertheless, the timid little woman *did* murmur that it was very interesting and there must be something in it, as heretofore she had always gone to sleep over "Hamlet."

If people would only cast commentators aside and read "Hamlet" by the light of their own understanding, they would be surprised to find how much clearer the text is than writers are willing to have it appear.[1]

[1] One is tempted to "wrangle gently" with Mr. White for his statement that the *Ghost* does not appear in the third act, *Hamlet* being the victim of an optical delusion. Does not the *Ghost* speak to *Hamlet?* Why is not the *Ghost* as real in the third as in the first act? Merely because invisible to the

Fechter's *Hamlet* was not the introspective student of tradition. He was a man of the world, in the noblest sense of the term, of joyous disposition, whose temper — and here he agreed with Goethe — assumed its mournful tinge upon the death of his father and the unseemly marriage of his mother. "Not reflective or sorrowful by nature, reflection and sorrow had become for him a heavy obligation." The *Queen* refers to him as "my too much changed son," and the *King* marvels at *Hamlet's* transformation: —

Queen, and visible to *Horatio* and *Marcellus?* This is nothing new in supernatural scenes. "Be subject to no sight but thine and mine," says *Prospero* to *Ariel*, "invisible to every eyeball else;" and *Ariel* curvets unseen of mortals. *Hamlet* would have doubted his senses had not the *Guards* and the cooler-headed *Horatio* beheld the *Ghost;* but how contrary to the dead *King's* tender nature to make himself visible to the *Queen*, who, already plunged in agony, would probably be crazed by so awful a spectacle as the apparition of her murdered husband?

And with regard to Wittenberg, which seems to be the source of so much discussion, there is nothing to indicate *Hamlet's* still being a student. Overcome with grief, disgusted with the world, he talks of going to his old university town where he passed his youth, and where he is most likely to meet true friends, among them *Horatio*. He is easily dissuaded by his mother, and Wittenberg is brought to him in the guise of fellow-students. From first to last the text infers *Hamlet's* long acquaintance with the court and outside world. His welcome to his old friend, "Horatio, or I do forget myself," denotes that the two have not met for some time. *Rosencrantz* and *Guildenstern* are spoken of as

"Being of so young days brought up with him;"

and *Hamlet* conjures them "by the consonancy of our youth."

> "So I call it,
> Since nor th' exterior nor the inward man
> Resembles that it was."

"I have of late lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises," *Hamlet* states; by which we get a glimpse of a boon companion, "the observed of all observers," one "loved of the distracted multitude," — who delights in all manner of sports, who up to the last moment is so sensitive of his prowess in fencing as to be somewhat jealous of *Laertes's* reputation, and long to cross weapons with him.

His first impulse in grief is to commit suicide, — ever the panacea of hot-blooded sanguine temperaments. No civilized country can rival France in the number of its suicides, yet no people are possessed of equal *esprit* and buoyancy. But *Hamlet* is a good Catholic. The Everlasting has "fixed his canon 'gainst self-slaughter;" and, though he twice meditates taking his life, he is restrained by religious faith. He is brave and daring, as a soldier ought to be. He is not afraid of his father's *Ghost*, for, on hearing of its appearance, he quickly exclaims, "I would I had been there," and "I will speak to it though hell itself should gape, and bid me hold my peace." Hence he is awed, not terrified, by the *Ghost's* presence. The *Ghost* makes night hideous, because it shakes his disposition "with thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls." Is this the language of a man given to cloistered musings and inward living? How can *Hamlet* possess

> "Courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword,"

and lead the life of a seer? It is impossible. He is first courtier and lastly scholar, be it observed. He is a lover of acting, he is an acute critic, and therefore must be *of* the world, as well as *in* it. Introverted minds take little pleasure in the studies to which *Hamlet* evidently gave much time. *Hamlet's* humor is so deeply implanted that even in the most solemn moments he cannot refrain from apposite punning. It is carried even to grimness over "this fellow in the cellarage." This extreme from grave to gay is not an attribute of introversion, but quite accords with the nature of such a man as Fechter put before us.

Fechter left no doubt as to *Hamlet's* passionate love for *Ophelia*, and truly it was grateful to see the meaning of the text fulfilled. A man who "hath given countenance to his speech with almost all the holy vows of heaven," who begs "dear Ophelia" to

> "Doubt that the stars are fire;
> Doubt that the sun doth move;
> Doubt truth to be a liar;
> But never doubt I love;"

who over her grave declares "that forty thousand brothers could not, with all their quantity of love, make up his sum," and who immediately upon the assumption of madness falls to such perusal of *Ophelia's* face "as he would draw it," and

> "Raised a sigh so piteous and profound,
> As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
> And end his being,"

must be a much more intense lover than actors and Shakespearian commentators have heretofore admitted.

If words mean anything, they mean that *Hamlet's* passion is far stronger than *Ophelia's*. With his intellect and unusual depth of feeling it must of necessity be so; and if *Ophelia* goes mad, it is because she has less character to withstand sorrow.

Never was Fechter's *Hamlet* at any time really mad, Coleridge and the Kembles (Charles Kemble excepted) to the contrary notwithstanding. He carried out what Lowell has since admirably written: "If Shakespeare himself, without going mad, could so observe and remember all the abnormal symptoms as to be able to reproduce them in *Hamlet*, why should it be beyond the power of *Hamlet* to reproduce them in himself? If you deprive *Hamlet* of reason, there is no truly tragic motive left. He would be a fit subject for bedlam, but not for the stage. We might have pathology enough, but no pathos. Ajax first becomes tragic when he recovers his wits. If *Hamlet* is irresponsible, the whole play is a chaos. That he is not so might be proved by evidence enough, were it not labor thrown away."

True to his times, *Hamlet* does not scruple to take life when it comes between him and the work of his destiny. "By Heaven, I 'll make a ghost of him that lets me," is the threat launched at even so dear a friend as *Horatio*. "I find thee apt" in revenge, says the *Ghost;* and quicker than thought *Hamlet* dedicates his life to one fell purpose, beginning by wiping away all "trivial fond records," — *Ophelia's* love. Nevertheless he is held back by "a wise skepticism," "the first attribute of a good critic," which suggests the possibility of the spirit's being a devil. Fechter's *Hamlet*

was restrained by reasonable doubt, not vacillation of purpose, and no sooner caught" "the conscience of the King" than he could drink hot blood. He did not kill the *King* at prayers, because of that Catholic faith which would send this same villain to heaven, and thus kill all revenge, which is the motive of his action.

> "Would I had met my dearest *foe in heaven*,
> Or ever I had seen that day," —

his mother's second wedding day, — is the heaviest curse that *Hamlet* can invoke upon his own head. Would he then be likely voluntarily to bring about its fulfilment? He keeps himself in training by self-reproach of cowardice, of which there is not the slightest evidence in deeds. He cannot, as he has promised the *Ghost*,

> "With wings as swift
> As meditation, or the thoughts of love,
> . . *sweep* to . . . revenge,"

and he falls "a-cursing like a very drab," unpacking his "heart with words," as such natures are very apt to do when circumstances stay their actions. Without a moment's hesitation he stabs *Polonius*, but repents the deed, and is engaged in drawing aside the body when he is seized and brought *guarded* before the *King*, in which condition he is unarmed. Hurried with "fiery quickness" on board a bark for England, there is no opportunity for action; but, thoughts being bloody, he forges letters whereby *Guildenstern* and *Rosencrantz* — "they are not near my conscience," pleads *Hamlet* — are doomed to death the moment they reach

their destination. Chased by pirates, *Hamlet* alone becomes their prisoner, and returns to Denmark. *Horatio* goes to meet him; and as they tarry in a graveyard, the burial of *Ophelia* drives him to momentary frenzy. Without weapons, he cannot then and there kill the *King*, nor is the most desperate mind controlled by more than one great passion at a time. In the next scene, which must be immediate, — as not till then does *Hamlet* refer to his escape and plot against his treacherous fellow-students, — he does not hesitate to tell *Horatio* of his purpose to "quit the King with his arm" during the short interval that must elapse ere the fate of *Guildenstern* and *Rosencrantz* is known in Denmark. Being sorry for having forgotten himself to *Laertes*, whom he loves and whom he has wronged, he accepts the challenge of a bout at fencing, that he may then and there apologize to the brother of his adoption, and also gain easy approach to his intended victim, the *King*. He cannot kill the *King* with bated rapier; but the moment he learns that the weapon in his hand is unbated and envenomed, *Hamlet* stabs the evil genius of the play. The *King* has no doubt of *Hamlet's* capability of murder, as proved by his saying after hearing of the death of *Polonius*, "It had been so with us, had we been there," and by his haste in sending him to England.

Such, from his acting, was Fechter's conception of *Hamlet*, sympathetic to me in all things, except perhaps in this matter of vacillation; and even here one may make out a strong case. The only lines that can be quoted against Fechter's theory are the few appertaining to the *Ghost's* reappearance.

"Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
Th' important acting of your dread command?
O, say!"

inquires *Hamlet*.

"*Ghost*. Do not forget. This visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose."

Hamlet but repeats the self-accusation prompted by over-sensibility as to the performance of an awful duty.

"Ah, but what blunted purpose does the *Ghost* come to whet?" asks the reader. Suppose this visitation be to whet *Hamlet's* almost blunted purpose of speaking daggers, but using none? The *Ghost* unlike his former self, says not one word about *Claudius*. He straightway exhorts Hamlet to step between *his mother* and her fighting soul! Whereupon *Hamlet's* tone changes from violent denunciation to soft questioning, "How is it with you, lady?" One moment more and the passion that made a corpse of *Polonius* might have wreaked vengeance on the guilty *Queen;* for though *Hamlet* declares that he is neither splenitive nor rash, yet is there "something dangerous" in him, a something that might have led him to strangle *Laertes* had he lost entire self-control. That the *Queen* believes her son capable of the deed is seen at the opening of this scene, when *Hamlet* says: —

"Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not budge;
You go not, till I set you up a glass
Where you may see the inmost part of you."

These are not desperate words, and yet the *Queen* cries out: —

> "What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not *murder* me?
> Help, help, ho!"

Killing the *Queen* was not impossible to the *Hamlet* of Fechter, who was convinced of her complicity in his father's murder.

> "O Hamlet! speak no more,
> Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;
> And there I see such black and grainéd spots
> As will not leave their tinct."

Mere marriage with a brother-in-law, even after two months of widowhood, hardly admits of so fearful a confession; and her fear of being murdered by *Hamlet*, leads to the inference that she knows she deserves the punishment. Further coloring for this hypothesis may be obtained in *Hamlet's* response to the *Ghost*: —

> "Do not look upon me;
> Lest, with this piteous action you convert
> My stern effects; then what have I to do
> Will want true colors; tears, perchance, for blood."

Surely this does not indicate absence of will on *Hamlet's* part; and as stage ghosts always produce the effect they desire, the dead king attains the purpose of his "pale glaring." Certainly he had no such tearful influence over *Hamlet* during the first interview. Is the object, then, the same? Indeed it would seem not; and since I find Shakespeare so ready to agree with Fechter, I doubt my ability to withhold allegiance to this startling innovation.

The critic may one day entertain one opinion of

Hamlet, and another the next; he may be very positive in some particulars, and not quite sure in others. He can leave a door open by which his opinions may make a dignified exit, should an intellectual breeze threaten to overthrow them; but the actor enjoys no such privilege. He must thoroughly understand his intentions before being able to interpret them. He must feel certain that, according to his light, his conception is right, or he cannot render it with force or send conviction to the hearts and heads of his audience. The business of the critic, therefore, in this matter of "Hamlet," is not so much with the conception of the character as with the manner in which the actor's conception is carried out. If it is consistent from beginning to end, if it takes such strong hold as to prevent any escape from it, if its great power absolutely bullies one out of cherished theories, if its humanity makes one look back upon previous *Hamlets* as so many lay-figures galvanized into spasmodic action, if it absorbs attention and creates a positive sensation, then does the actor merit critical enthusiasm; for the critic's business is to *appreciate*, to appreciate is to estimate justly, and just estimation calls for as much delight at what is fine as disapprobation of what is false. Fechter produced all these effects. He was great not only in his originality but in his rendering, the greatness of which I will do my poor best to show by photographing his *Hamlet* in such details as are food for critics and actors.

Fechter's study was not confined to his own part, as was seen immediately in the reading of *Horatio*, upon the entrance of the *Ghost*: —

"But, soft; behold! lo, where it comes again!
I'll cross it, though it blast me. Stay, illusion!
If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
Speak to me. (*Ghost stops.*)"

In Pre-Fechterian days *Horatios* senselessly *crossed the Ghost's path*, as if such a step would stay its progress. Not so with Fechter, whose *Horatio* made the sign of the cross, at which the *Ghost* stopped as a Catholic ghost should. Once interpreted thus, intelligence exclaims "Of course!" and yet *Horatios* have been crossing the stage for three hundred years!

He was gloomy enough, was Fechter's *Hamlet*, as he sat beside his mother, — starting when the *King* addressed him as "our *son*," yet gently exclaiming while kissing the *Queen's* hand with courtly grace, and giving by almost imperceptible accent a key to the estimate in which he held his uncle-father,

"I shall in all my best obey *you*, madam."

Left to himself, he gazed fondly at his father's portrait, worn about his neck, and illustrated the beautiful apostrophe by reference to it. Thus did Fechter prepare his audience for the text. Misunderstanding was impossible. His *Hamlet* deceived no one. He was as honest as the day is light. He drew his lines plainly between friend and acquaintance, and his fondness for *Horatio* was strongly defined from the moment of meeting. There were three distinct shades of tone in "My good friend" (meaning *Horatio*), "I am very glad to see you" (meaning *Marcellus*), and "Good even, sir" (meaning *Bernardo*). *Hamlet* wasted no affection.

He was generous; but he was losing faith in mankind, and trusted few.

An expression of great and tender beauty passed over Fechter's face as, with clasped hands, he murmured

"My father, — methinks I see my father;"

while there was filial pride in his explanation, with hand upon *Horatio's* shoulder,

"He was a *man;* take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again."

When *Horatio* described his encounter with the *Ghost*, Fechter crossed his hands the moment his father was mentioned, as if praying for the unhappy spirit. The action was entirely natural to a Catholic. Appealingly sweet was his

"Did you not speak to it?"

addressed to *Marcellus*, to which his *Horatio* replied,

"My lord, *I* did."

Doubting, not willing to believe without strong evidence, he gave the line, "Then saw you not his face?" as if it read "Then you did *not* see his face;" which seems reasonable from *Horatio's* answer: —

"O yes, my lord, he wore his beaver up.
. . . . . .
Hamlet. I would *I* had been there.
Horatio. It would have much amazed you.
Hamlet. Very like, very like."

These lines have always been given as a response to *Horatio*. Fechter, meditating on the startling intelli-

gence that the apparition wore *his beaver up*, murmured "Very like," as if the sentence read, "Very like — my father." Of course the *Ghost* would amaze *Hamlet*. He is already amazed,— therefore the "very like" fits far more gracefully into Fechter's setting. Tears filled his eyes as he asked,

"Stayed it long?"

When *Hamlet*, *Horatio*, and *Marcellus* appear in the fourth scene, Fechter caused *Hamlet* to come from an opposite direction. Why? Because he had previously said that he would visit them "upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve." They meet for the first time, and the dialogue says as much. Strange that it took a Frenchman to find this out.

Enveloped in a gray picturesque cloak and black velvet cowl, Fechter's *Hamlet* dropped the former, and, with hands on *Horatio* at sight of the *Ghost*, delivered the invocation with solemn tender earnestness, removing the cowl at the word *king*, and throwing a filial pathos into *father*.

"Go on, *I'll* follow thee."

His exit was slow, but in no way unnaturally measured, — with sword unsheathed and held in the left hand as if it were a cross.

"Alas, *poor* ghost!"

was given with pitying sweetness of tone. Kneeling at the words, "I *am* thy father's spirit," Fechter did not rise until the adjuration, "Haste me to know," etc.; and though his back was turned to the audience during

the *Ghost's* confession, there was much expression in his pantomime. Nevertheless, but for the exceedingly clever management of the *Ghost's* instantaneous disappearance, — the invention being Fechter's, — it was a pity to lose the play of feature which Fechter could have thrown into his eager, listening silence. He bowed profoundly at the *Ghost's*, "Fare thee well at once!" and when *Horatio* called without, "Heaven secure him!" meaning *Hamlet*, Fechter, intent upon the *Ghost*, prayerfully added "So be it," — turning the words to a deeper significance than they had ever possessed. What immediately followed was no less admirably treated. *Horatio* alone was his valued friend, *Horatio* alone had so far sworn not to reveal the news, and *Hamlet* hurriedly began to tell his story, "There 's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark," — when, suddenly remembering and doubting *Marcellus*, he turned from his purpose and added, "but he 's an arrant knave;" at which platitude *Horatio* has reason to criticise his friend. The line,

> "You, as your business and desire shall point you,"

was addressed to *Marcellus*. *Hamlet's* "wild and whirling" words were because of his presence. He was talking to conceal thought. Taking *Horatio's* hand (according to stage direction) he remarked to him,

> "Touching this vision here, —
> It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you."

Then, looking at *Marcellus*, he continued,

> "For *your* desire to know what is between us,
> O'ermaster it as you may."

Fechter's *Hamlet* did not insult *Horatio* by assuming superior wisdom and exclaiming, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in *your* philosophy," but accented *philosophy*, by which the pronoun possessed the same significance as when Edmund Kean substituted *our* for *your*.

With arm linked in *Horatio's*, *Hamlet* said, "Let us go in together," and leaving *Marcellus* down the stage addressed to him the parting injunction, "And still your fingers on your lips, I pray." The line is certainly intended for *Marcellus*, who cannot be included in *Hamlet's* invitation, inasmuch as, after the exit, *Hamlet* must impart the *Ghost's* secret to *Horatio*, the two friends not meeting again until the third act, when *Hamlet*, in referring to the play, says, —

> "One scene of it comes near the circumstance
> Which I have told *thee*, of my father's death."

If circumstantial evidence proves aught, it proves the truth of Fechter's conception. There was no ranting in his rendering of the couplet,

> "The time is out of joint," etc.

Its power was in its concentrated desperation.

The admirable shades and touches in the second act were equally pertinent. Dialogue never received more varied or more thoughtful treatment. *Polonius* never attempted to master such keen madness. "Conception is a blessing; but as your daughter may conceive, — friend, look to 't." It was a mad laugh that followed "friend." *Hamlet* pointed to his open book as he muttered, "look to 't;" and *Polonius*, literal in all

things, ran his eye over the page to learn the "cause of this defect." *Hamlet* watched him narrowly, as if to see how the simulated madness took effect, when the old man delivered his side speech beginning, "How pregnant sometimes his replies are!" and there was a world of weariness pent up in his reiterated exclamation, "Except my life!" Tired, tired, tired! Revenge and sorrow were never nature's heritage to such as he. Too brave, too conscientious to shake duty off, relief was sought in word and expression.

Hamlet's reception of *Rosencrantz* and *Guildenstern* was most cordial, until he saw his uncle's portrait around the neck of the latter; then expression and manner changed, and the question, "Were you not sent for?" was put eagerly, with suspicion of foul play which waxed stronger as he bade them speak "to the purpose." Words mean something when thus interpreted. *Hamlet's* rejoinder, "And those that would make mouths at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats apiece for his picture in little," was illustrated by his taking up the picture pendent from *Guildenstern's* neck. Upon dropping it, he crossed to the right, and made an "aside," perfectly comprehensible to all, of the succeeding sentence, "There is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it out." Were audiences given to acute criticism, and did reason rule the day, theatres would resound with bravos at such renderings as this, rather than at the tearing of passion to tatters.

One knew by the tender music of *Hamlet's* voice in exclaiming, "O Jephthah, Judge of Israel, what a

treasure hadst thou!" that his thoughts were with "the fair Ophelia," and it was this memory that rendered him so gentle in checking *Polonius* for interrupting the player. Hushing him, commanding silence by putting finger on lips with as much kindliness as if the old courtier were indeed a big baby, *Hamlet* took up the text, "So; proceed you," and for the first time the little word *so* was set in its proper action. *Hamlet* listened with such interest to the *Actor's* speech as to accompany it with unconscious pantomine and silent repetition of the words; but this was not original with Fechter, Garrick having done the same.

"But who, ah, woe! had seen the mobled queen."

"The mobled queen!" repeated Fechter's *Hamlet*, thinking of his mother; and, struck by the coincidence, became so absorbed as to leave *Polonius* unchecked when he again interrupted the *First Actor*. There was genuine respectful sympathy in *Hamlet's* manner of instructing that the players be well treated; such sympathy as, if prevalent in society, would raise the stage to its proper level, — beside the pulpit. Equally wonderful in its humanity was the pity breathing through *Hamlet's* command to the first actor, that *Polonius* be not mocked.

The tremendous soliloquy closing this act was marvellous in variety. Its gradual crescendo and diminuendo were most artistic, while the climax,

"The play 's the thing,
Wherein I 'll catch the conscience of the King."

came like a sudden revelation to a tortured brain, and was clutched at (if I may say so) with all the energy with which nature seizes upon forlorn hopes.

Fechter pointed the moral of the soliloquy, "To be or not to be," by bringing on an unsheathed sword, as if he had again been contemplating the suicide that would free him from his oath.

Very beautiful and equally original was *Hamlet's* scene with *Ophelia*. He was a lover the moment his eyes fell upon her, and he cast aside every semblance of madness until *Ophelia* returned his letters, when the change of Fechter's expression was as great as the change of language; but when listening to the gentle maiden's reproaches, there was pictured such agonized regret, at throwing away every chance of happiness, as made the heart ache, for Fechter's *Hamlet* was always real, always a suffering man, never an actor.

How pantomine illuminates a sentence was seen in *Hamlet's* reference to the power of Beauty, which "will sooner transform Honesty from what it is to a bawd, than the force of Honesty can translate Beauty into his likeness; this was sometimes a paradox," — here Fechter paused, looked sadly at the letters in his hand returned by the woman *Hamlet* loved, and then added, — "but *now* the time gives it proof." Still his heart was bursting to speak the truth, and the confession, "I did love you once," was given with tearful eyes and choked utterance. When *Ophelia* exclaimed, "I was the more deceived," Fechter's tender action, unseen by her, denoted that he *must* fold her in his arms; but, forced to restraint, he honestly, earnestly

begged her to get to a nunnery, as the only sanctuary worthy of her. Then seeing *Polonius*, he, to test *Ophelia's* truthfulness, asked, "Where 's your father?" and, finding her false, burst into frenzied raving, intended far more for the ears of her father than for the helpless creature trembling before him. Again subdued by love, *Hamlet* approached *Ophelia* with extended arms, almost embraced her, but, recollecting that he was watched by *Polonius*, cried pathetically, "To a nunnery, go," and, thoroughly overcome, rushed off the stage. In this scene Fechter did not allow *Hamlet* to see the *King*, for this espionage would so convince him of his uncle's guilt as to render the play unnecessary.

Nothing could be finer of its kind than Fechter's intelligent and colloquial delivery of *Hamlet's* advice to the players; and in this connection it should be stated that he was the first to introduce a boy with chopins, in lieu of a woman actress.[1]

Hamlet gazed fondly at *Ophelia* when announcing the Court's coming to the play, showing first the lover before putting on the mask.

"I eat the air, promise-crammed; you cannot feed capons so," said *Hamlet*.

"I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine," rejoined the *King*.

"No, nor mine, now;" and Fechter, by an exquisite action of the hand, made you see why those words were

[1] It may be said of Fechter, as Hazlitt said of Kean, that if Shakespeare had written marginal directions to the players, in the manner of German dramatists, he would often have directed them to do what Fechter did.

no longer his. They had passed into the air for all time, and belonged to space. Pantomime has its prose and its poetry. This action was rhythmic.

He never forgot to spare *Polonius* in the presence of others. "I did enact Julius Cæsar," maunders the old man. "I was killed i' the capital; Brutus killed me."

"It was a brute part of him," *Hamlet* replied, and then, walking away, added as an aside, "to kill so capital a calf there." The very word *there* suggests this treatment of the sentence, and yet again Fechter discovered it.

"Nay, then, let the Devil wear black, for I 'll have a suit of sables," reads the customary text; but what said Fechter? "Let the Devil wear black 'fore *I* 'll have a suit of sable." The mystery is solved at once, and, turning to the Folio Shakespeare, the line is so written down. As the Folio is supposed to have been printed from a playhouse copy, Fechter's version was probably as correct as it was intelligible.

"*Ophelia.* 'T is brief, my lord.
Hamlet. As woman's love."

Most *Hamlets* insult *Ophelia* by hurling this reply at her. Fechter gave it as if communing with his own thoughts, and looked the while toward his mother. "That 's wormwood," was addressed to *Horatio;* and, "If she should break it now," to *King* and *Queen.*

Admirable was Fechter's action after the discovery and call for "lights." Throughout the play *Hamlet* had lain at *Ophelia's* feet, but had *amused* himself (so

reads the conventional stage business) with nothing, not even with the specified fan. Before him lay the text of the play, which he followed closely, thus anticipating it and watching the effect upon the royal pair. Discovery made and audience gone, Fechter tore the leaves from his play-book and scattered them in the air, as he rose and delivered the well-known quatrain. His utterance was rapid; excitement at last rendered it thick. The blood rushed to his head, he put his hand to his throat as if choking. "Ah, ha!" became a gasp; he leaned upon *Horatio* and, for relief, for solace, called for music. There was no bridging over an inexplicable chasm, such as we have seen from childhood. It was perfect nature. Upon the entrance of *Guildenstern* and *Rosencrantz*, *Hamlet* fell into a chair from exhaustion, until his mother's name was mentioned, when, out of that courtesy which was rarely forgotten, he rose.

Guildenstern, with the locket about his neck, was far more hateful to *Hamlet* than the less treacherous *Rosencrantz*.

"*Hamlet.* Sir, I cannot.

"*Guildenstern.* What, my lord?

"*Hamlet.* Make you a wholesome answer; . . . but, sir, such answer as I can make, you shall command; or rather, as you say, my mother; therefore, no more, but to the matter: my mother, you say —

"*Rosencrantz.* Then, thus she says: your behavior hath struck her into amazement and admiration."

Here *Hamlet* snubbed *Guildenstern*, and "my mother, you say," was addressed to *Rosencrantz*, who immedi-

ately took up the thread of argument as shown. Hazlitt declares that acting *Hamlet* is like the attempt to embody a shadow. He would never have made this statement had he seen Fechter's key to the character.

The whole scene with the *Queen* was one panorama of tragic pictures. Having killed *Polonius*, Fechter elaborated Shakespeare's few words by the agony of his expression at having made so fatal a mistake, and by throwing away his sword that it might not be repeated.

The excitement produced by the *Ghost's* appearance yielded to regret at his departure; and there was also a tenderness toward his guilty mother, who finally knelt before him, being raised up gently at the words, "Confess yourself to Heaven," etc. When *Hamlet* bade her good-night, she attempted to bless him, but was firmly, not unkindly, repelled. This action was followed by the lines,

> "And when you are desirous to *be* blessed,
> I 'll blessing beg of *you*."

Before the sobbing *Queen* retired, she once more turned to her son, exclaiming, "Hamlet" (this was Fechter's introduction), and stretched out her hands for a filial embrace. *Hamlet* held up his father's picture, the sight of which spoke volumes to the wretched woman, who staggered from the stage. Kissing this picture, *Hamlet* murmured sadly,

> "I must be cruel, only to be kind;"

then, taking light in hand and raising the arras, gazed at *Polonius*, exclaiming,

> "Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind."

After the third act *Hamlet* is but half his former self. The actor would willingly stop short, leaving the last two acts to the imagination, and in the present condition of stock companies the critic would gladly assent to curtailment; but it must be five acts or nothing, and patience endures to the last. Fechter's treatment of the *King*, in the fourth act, was that of undisguised contempt. "If your messenger find him [*Polonius*] not there [in heaven], seek him in the other place *yourself;*" and it was seen that if *Hamlet* were not guarded, he would then and there have sent the *King* to "the other place" in search of his courtier.

When Fechter produced "Hamlet" in his own theatre, the time of the churchyard scene was that of a brilliant sunset, making a fine contrast between the thoughtless joy of nature and the grief of humanity. Moreover, it is neither customary nor practicable to dig graves by the fickle light of the moon feebly assisted by one small lantern; and when truth is compatible with art, — for my part, I believe the two walk hand in hand, — it should be adhered to. Fechter's apostrophe to *poor* Yorick was singularly tender: "Here hung those lips, that I have kissed I know not how oft;" and Fechter carried the skull almost to his lips, when he put it away with a shiver. From time immemorial *Ophelia's* body has been borne from *church* to churchyard, when the text tells us that her burial in sanctified ground is granted under protest.

> "She is allowed her virgin crants,
> Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
> Of bell and burial.
>
> . . . . . .

> We should profane the service of the dead
> To sing a requiem, and such rest to her
> As to peace-parted souls."

Hence Fechter caused *Ophelia* to be brought through the churchyard gateway, and the officiating priest wore none of the insignia of his office.

> "What, the fair Ophelia?"

and, overwhelmed with agony, *Hamlet* fell on his knees beside a tomb and buried his face in his hands. In the controversy between *Hamlet* and *Laertes*, Macready and Kemble leaped into the grave, and there went through the grappling in true Punch and Judy fashion. The illustrious example has been often followed; but Fechter wisely abstained from the absurdity, not approaching the grave until his last word was spoken, when, gazing in agony at the gaping void and at *Ophelia's* corse, he was dragged off the stage by *Horatio*.

In the art of fencing Fechter was consummate; consequently the final scene was full of spirit and interest. His arrangement of the stage was likewise admirable. In the background ran a gallery, to which a short flight of stairs led on each side of the stage, and by which all exits and entrances were made. To the left stood the throne, where sat the *King*. The moment *Hamlet* exclaimed,

> "Ho! let the door be locked.
> Treachery! seek it out."

the *King* exhibited signs of fear; and, while *Laertes* made his terrible confession, the regicide stole to the

opposite stairs, shielding himself from *Hamlet's* observation behind a group of courtiers, who, paralyzed with horror, failed to remark the action. *Laretes* no sooner uttered the words, "The King 's to blame," than *Hamlet* turned suddenly to the throne in search of his victim. Discovering the ruse, he rushed up the left-hand stairs, met the *King* in the centre of the gallery, and stabbed him. It would be difficult to conceive a more effective manner of despatching *Claudius*, or one more in harmony with good taste. He was not butchered as in the old "business," and the stage was relieved of one dead body. As he descended the stairs the potent poison stole upon *Hamlet*, who, murmuring "The rest is silence," fell dead on the corpse of *Laertes*, thus showing his forgiveness of treachery and remembrance of *Ophelia*. There was no contortion in Fechter's manner of dying. Edmund Kean was no doubt right in illustrating a death by poison; but if *Hamlet* dies thus, surely *Laertes* must meet his doom in like manner. Two such exhibitions would be beyond human endurance; and, as *Laertes* dies first, *Hamlet's* effects would be lost. Therefore Fechter was not without reason in abstaining from literalness.

Does not the photograph, dim as it is, show Fechter's power in Hamlet? Does it not give evidence of ideas and ideality?

The fair hair of Fechter's *Hamlet* was not an original conception, though from the criticisms one might have imagined as much. Goethe declares that "as a Dane, as a Northman, Hamlet is fair-haired and blue-eyed by descent." "Absurd!" cries a voice; "how

is this possible, when we are distinctly told that his father's hair is 'sable silvered'?" Does it follow that *Hamlet* the younger must therefore be dark haired? To my way of thinking, Fechter, when he first arrived in this country, gave us the ideal *Hamlet*, who, with all his manly beauty, "is fat and scant of breath." "Brown-complexioned people in their youth are seldom plump," argues Goethe. Fechter was thoroughly manly, as *Hamlet*, who is much given to exercise, should be. No contrary opinion can take comfort in *Hamlet's* declaration, that *Claudius* is no more like his father than he to Hercules; for Hercules performed such feats of prowess as astounded both gods and men. Fechter was robust without being unpleasantly so; he was graceful, supple as an athlete, courtly, wondrously picturesque; and his beautiful flaxen wig so transformed his coloring as to cause his dark-hazel eyes to be mistaken for blue.

There has been something said of Fechter's liberties with Shakespeare's language. Curious to know how much truth lay in this accusation, I have followed him, while acting, with book in hand. Fechter spoke no more than was set down to him, — nor less. He was what is called, in stage parlance, "letter perfect." There were a few trips of accent, — very few, — made with the lips entirely; for when the offending passages were afterwards shown to Fechter, he spoke them correctly, showing that the head had not been at fault. And here lies the secret of the charge that Fechter had no settled convictions as to the reading of *Hamlet*. Rarely repeating the *same* error, he supplemented it with another, — as, for example,

"O horrible, horrible, most *horrible!*"

intending "*most* horrible," and so delivering the passage on the following performance. These were slight blemishes to weigh against a beautiful work of art.

> "When reason yields to passion's wild alarms,
> And the whole state of man is up in arms,
> What but a critic would condemn the player
> For pausing here, when cool sense pauses there?
> Whilst, working from the heart, the fire I trace,
> And mark it strongly flaming to the face;
> Whilst in each sound I hear the very man,
> *I can't catch words, and pity those who can.*"

Nor is there much more foundation for the accusation of "cutting" Shakespeare. No actor has ever spoken the whole of *Hamlet*. Betterton took many liberties; and what Garrick did finally shall be referred to. When the latter performed this character in Dublin, an Irish critic suggested the advisability of his leaving out *Hamlet's* "abominable" soliloquy while the *King* is at prayers. Garrick carried out the suggestion, and not until recently has it been restored to English theatres. Fechter's version was that of Kemble and of the stage. If, in the last act, he did not always deliver the frenzied speech addressed to *Laertes*, and cut short his dying words, it was because of exceptional circumstances.

Whether there ever lived a thoroughly satisfactory *Hamlet* is extremely doubtful. What Burbage was, nobody knows. What Betterton made of the character it is possible to conceive; for, with all Cibber's praise of this actor, Quin owned that he "would not go down in Garrick's days," — and as Quin himself, grounded on

Booth's and Betterton's school, died artistically as soon as Garrick's genius illuminated the English stage, the critic has very grave doubts as to any standard set up by Cibber, who showed his bad taste by cordially hating Garrick's acting. Then as to Garrick's *Hamlet*, it comes in "questionable shape;" for, though the great little man was the first to produce the play in 1742, shorn of every objectionable word and the traditional music, he gave the address to the players like a pedagogue, — walked backward and forward, twirling a white *handkerchief*, while exclaiming,

"Some must laugh, while some must weep,"

and performed other antics hardly compatible with Shakespeare's *Dane*. That he failed to appreciate the character is evident from the manner in which he slaughtered the play thirty years after, when he "improved" Shakespeare out of sight in the last acts, and contemplated turning the grave-diggers and *Osric*, "the Danish macaroni," into a farce! Yet this "mass of deformity" held the stage eight years with a *Hamlet* that exemplified the theory of perpetual motion! Cooke in *Hamlet* was "one mass of awkward error;" neither does Kemble, nor does the elder Kean, owe his fame to his personation of the character. Knowing this, Fechter acquires additional respect for his rendition of *Hamlet*.

Possessing good height, small hands and feet, a face so like Garrick's in contour and complexion as in a Garrick wig to render the resemblance astonishing, and so wonderful in expression as, like Talma's to need but

the passing of a hand to transform broad comedy into deepest tragedy; with a large magnetic ever-changing hazel eye, with pantomime that rivalled Ristori's, with a rich melodious voice that ran the gamut of the passions, with abundant sentiment and humor equally developed, with a sculptor's knowledge of form, a painter's love of costume and color, and a Frenchman's education in the best school of acting, Fechter took his place among the few great actors of the world. With regard to his pronunciation of English there was really very little fault to be found. In private it rarely occurred to the most careful listeners that Fechter was not, so far as concerns accent, an Englishman. On the stage, however, there were times when, if he did not feel well, his speech became thick, or when, if carried away by passion, his delivery was somewhat indistinct; but ordinarily his enunciation was wonderfully clear and his English far purer than that spoken by the actors around him. It is somewhat amusing to hear Americans, who are proverbially inelegant in their language, finding fault with Fechter's occasional slips of the tongue. What would they say to Garrick, with his *shupreme*, *shuperior*, *vurtue*, *fersely* (for fiercely), *Isrel* for Israel, *villin* for villain, and *appeal* for appall? Churchill, in his "Rosciad," declared that "Garrick never did or never could speak ten successive lines of Shakespeare with grammatical propriety." Nevertheless Garrick was great. What would they say to Kemble's "foggy throat," that was wont to

"Fill all thy bones with a-ches,"

and whose vitiated orthoepy induced Leigh Hunt to publish a lexicon, that theatre-goers might have a key to the text? The elder Kean had countless vulgarisms of pronunciation. Vulgarity is inexcusable. A foreign accent may not be desirable, yet it is far more grateful to a musical ear than the common variety of nasal twang in which both our pulpit and stage indulge to an intolerable extent.

Writer, as well as sculptor and actor, Fechter was the author of French plays to which he never appended his name, as well as of several English dramatizations. No mean poet, he rendered "Romeo and Juliet" into French verse.

> "Hence, to thy praises," Fechter, "I agree,
> And pleased with nature must be pleased with thee!"

FECHTER'S

"CLAUDE MELNOTTE."

FECHTER'S "CLAUDE MELNOTTE."

Of the popularity of maudlin sentimentality there can be no doubt; otherwise the "Lady of Lyons" would long since have been consigned to an early grave with never a headstone to mark it. Thriving like a green bay-tree, it brings forth fruit even in chill December, breathing, apparently, no other atmosphere than that of its own tropical passion. To deny its cleverness as an acting play is as absurd as to deny its bathos; yet, clever though it be in effects, no one but Charles Fechter ever elevated it out of its drivel into romance. In reality *Claude Melnotte* is a "cad." He lies like a dozen troopers, he appropriates other people's rings and snuff-boxes, he pretends to be a gentleman. After undergoing a grand moral reform by taking part in the French spoliation of Italy, he returns to woo his wife, and establishes his title to the privilege by paying his father-in-law's debts with the silver spoons, "old masters," and *objets d'art* stolen from pillaged palaces. A fine record, surely.

Had *Melnotte* served in our civil war, the press would have united in one prolonged howl over the infamy of such vandalism; but the glamour of the footlights stifles the expostulations of conscience, and Fechter, despising

Bulwer's character while appreciating the effectiveness of the play, lifted *Melnotte* out of his very self and made a hero of him. If this is not creation, what is it? Men and women, girls and boys, old maids and bachelors, were spellbound. Hating *Pauline* for not immediately surrendering at discretion, they lived over past or dreamed of future joys. An effect like this renders actor far greater than play and proves the magic of real art, without which mock sentiment is — mock sentiment.

English journals pronounced Fechter's *Melnotte* the best that had ever been seen, and the verdict was doubtless correct, notwithstanding that Macready first brought out the "Lady of Lyons" at Covent Garden Theatre in 1838. With all Macready's ability — and that he was great in *Werner*, *Virginius*, *Richelieu*, *Lear*, and *William Tell*, no one who values the opinions of the best critics of a past generation can doubt — he did not shine as a lover. He invested his mistress with no reflected glory. He did his duty to the situation and text; and, doing but this, deprived passion of its sentiment. Love drops "like the gentle rain from heaven," and has no more to do with duty than the north pole has to do with the equator. "Mr. Macready's *Claude*," says the *London Times*, "was a less youthful and a more staid, serious, and — using the phrase without suggestion of offence — 'stilted person.'"

Undisturbed by the conventionalities of the English stage, desirous of putting as much nature as possible into the play, Fechter suggested several alterations to Bulwer, who, acknowledging their propriety, made them

without demur. The most important of these were the suppression of the first scene, by which condensation the play was strengthened; the substitution of *Beauseant* in person for the letter formerly delivered to and read by *Melnotte;* the omission of the extra lines after the words "Do you?" at the end of the second act; and the conclusion of the play at *Melnotte's* exclamation, "Thy husband!" by which artistic curtailment the curtain fell upon the exciting tableau of *Pauline* rushing to her husband's arms. After seeing this finale Bulwer himself marvelled that he had never thought of it. *Melnotte's* soliloquy in the fourth act was shorn of the lines:

> "She wakes to scorn, to hate, but not to shudder
> Beneath the touch of my abhorred love."

Costume and business underwent a greater revolution. Instead of the blouse and trousers worn by Macready and his successors, Fechter donned a rich bourgeois dress of the period, such as a "village prince" would be likely to wear at a festival. Instead of a nondescript uniform, Hessians, and cocked hat in the second act, Fechter wore powdered hair, and put on the black court suit, silk stockings, and chapeau bras of an Italian prince, who had nothing whatever to do with the plain hair and plain clothes of the revolution. Instead of concealing himself in the last act behind the feathers of a hypothetical hat, Fechter was disguised by his own hair and a mustache, and stood with a table between *Pauline* and himself, she not daring to raise her eyes to the man who is supposed to be *Melnotte's* intimate friend.

Prior to this interview, Fechter overcame the exceedingly awkward position in which the dramatist places *Melnotte*, — in introducing him to the *Deschappelles* and then leaving him for five or eight minutes with never a soul to talk to, and without a reason for such unwarrantable incivility, — by indicating that he would in no way disturb the drawing up of the marriage contract, and by retiring to a conservatory where he was presented by *Damas* to various ladies and gentlemen. An unnatural situation was thus rendered perfectly *comme il faut*, and all by the substitution of an evening assembly of interested friends for an afternoon meeting of the *Deschappelles* family.

Claude Melnotte is a Frenchman, and Fechter treated him as such. The moment he appeared, with prize rifle in hand, the audience felt the passion of the lover and longed to see the object of his homage. Poetic even in details, Fechter straightway laid his gun not on table or chair or in a corner, after the manner of ordinary *Melnottes*, but on the edge of his easel, beneath the portrait of *Pauline*, making of it a votive offering to the idol of his heart. How much this trifle meant! From first to last he treated his mother with downright affection. This in itself was a revelation, — stage mothers being regarded by their heroic children as necessary evils, to be tolerated with cold indifference. Hope, indignation, revenge, were vividly portrayed in the first act; while Fechter's comedy, in the second act, was good acting, for it *was* acting, — as far removed from Fechter's real comedy as artifice is removed from reality. His *Melnotte* was acting a part which he

despised, and there was consequently a want of repose about it quite in sympathy with the situation; but he took snuff nonchalantly, and occasionally put his hands in his pockets, as nobility always did during the reign of *petits maîtres*. Left alone with *Pauline*, constraint disappeared before the magic of love; and in his mouth the picture of that "palace lifting to eternal summer" became true art, fully justifying *Pauline's* tribute to his "eloquent tongue." We listened to sound, not sense, and saw the vision of love's young dream; and for the first time we saw *Melnotte* do justice to Bulwer's intention. The passage,

> "If thou wouldst have me paint
> The home to which, could love fulfil its prayers,
> This hand would lead thee, — listen,"

received proper treatment. "Could love fulfil its prayers" was spoken sadly, after a pause, and almost as an aside; nor did *Melnotte* fold *Pauline* in his arms until he was warmed by the recitation of his fancy. Very charming was the business at the end of this act, when *Melnotte*, seated at the right, overcome with agony at the treacherous part he was playing, and resting his arm upon the table beside him, gazed with fond remorse into *Pauline's* face as she stole toward him and stroked the extended hand. The tableau on *Pauline's* exit was admirable, and, when the curtain fell, *Melnotte* stood out as the picture of melancholy abstraction.

But it was in the third and fourth acts that Fechter showed his power, in the manliness of his passionate atonement. Picturesque and noble in his black velvet suit and gray cloak, he made *Beauseant* and *Glavis*

shrink from his dangerous presence as jackals shrink from the lion. His exclamation, "O Heaven, forgive me!" when wrapping *Pauline* in his cloak he led her to *Melnotte's* cottage, was the very keynote of despair. He put his neatest art into the scene of *Melnotte's* self-abasement. There was no raving. The confession beginning:

> "Pauline, by pride
> Angels have fallen ere thy time,"

was rendered with "a magic to exorcise hate," and culminated with a truly beautiful and original point.

> "And when thou art happy, and hast half forgot
> Him who so loved, so wronged thee, think at least
> Heaven left some remnant of the angels still
> In that poor peasant's nature!
> Ha! my mother!
> [*Widow comes down stairs;*]"

says the play-book.

Now, what did Fechter? Instead of summoning his mother as if she were a lackey, this admirable artist completely transfigured words and situation. At the beginning of the sentence quoted, the *Widow* appeared at the upper door, quietly descended the stairs, and stood beside her son, when, heart-broken he exclaimed,

> "*Ah!* my mother!"

and threw himself into her arms to find relief in tears. This alteration should be adopted by future *Claudes*. Equally fine was Fechter's expression at the close of the act, as he followed *Pauline's* exit with his eyes, and sinking to the ground, invoked Heaven's blessing upon her.

In wonderful contrast with the quiet beauty of the third was Fechter's finale to the fourth act. The worn-out text was clothed anew. It was a real scene, a real parting. The audience was thrilled by *Melnotte's* noble passion; the blood tingled through their veins as if they were being charged with electricity. The divine spark, of which we hear so much and see so little, asserted its presence; and when the curtain fell upon an entirely new tableau, no one could resist the enthusiasm of recalling again and again him who had made a magnificent hero out of an old stage bore. To the last there was manifest *Claude's* love for his mother, which so justifies the *Widow's* adoration of her son. He would not hurt her by even a word. After *Melnotte's* exclamation, "the husband of a being so beautiful . . . may be low born," Fechter took his mother's hand, adding, "there is no guilt in the decrees of Providence," with a tenderness that made us ask, "Why can't we have more acting like it?" His last embrace was for this widowed mother, and at sight of so true a son, so great a lover, even the manliest eye sympathized with rough *Colonel Damas* as he murmured, "I 'll be hanged if I 'm not going to blubber!"

The Marseillaise is usually played at the close of this act. Fechter introduced it after *Damas's* declaration that *Melnotte* would make an excellent soldier. Beginning *pianissimo*, the grand hymn rose to a gradual *crescendo* until the climax, when it burst forth with all its force. After such a vivid scene, of course the fifth act, in which *Melnotte* does little more than "stand at ease," was comparatively tame; but the old glow came over

us in watching Fechter's facial expression during the short interview with *Pauline*, in the final action of the tearing of the contract, and the happy embrace of man and wife with which Fechter rightly terminated the play.

"All the world loves a lover," says Emerson, and in this poetic fact lay Fechter's greatest power. Fechter's love-making was so far removed from what is seen on the stage, that the sympathetic spectator forgot its fiction. And it was because of this ideal element in his lovers that Fechter found his greatest admirers among women. Possessed of more sentiment than men, and hungry for sympathy, they recognized "the triumph of woman" in Fechter's *Ruy Blas* and *Claude Melnotte*, and were grateful to the artist.

FECHTER

IN FOUR CHARACTERS.

Frédéric de Marsan,

"On Demande un Gouverneur."

Don Cæsar de Bazan,

"Don Cæsar de Bazan."

Fabien and Louis dei Franchi,

"Corsican Brothers."

Monte Cristo,

"Monte Cristo."

"FRÉDÉRIC DE MARSAN."

VERSATILE, as the highest order of dramatic talent must ever be in order to sound the chord of human feeling, Fechter was equally at home in low comedy, high comedy, melodrama, and tragedy. Whatever he did last seemed that for which he was best fitted. His *Frédéric de Marsan* in the little French comedy of "On Demande un Gouverneur" was the perfection of neat acting. Never once did he raise his voice above a colloquial tone, not once did he make any greater effort for points than he would have made in his own drawing-room; yet, by merely holding the mirror up to nature, he riveted attention as closely as in the most effective dramas. No actor can personate comedy unless he be a gentleman. A comedian cannot strut, cannot "take steps;" he must bear himself with the ease peculiar to perfect breeding. A dress coat is a terrible ordeal, and he who wears it triumphantly is a *rara avis*. Fechter mastered its black angles. His assumption of feigned intoxication in "On Demande un Gouverneur," was consummate. Rare is the art that can render drunkenness charming. This Fechter possessed, and at the close of the scene the impulse was to demand its repetition. It was

humor devoid of grossness. Fechter could not touch anything without enveloping it in romance, and actually discovered the poetry of inebriety. He was as graceful in the vagaries of his legs as if he had been executing a *pas seul*. Fechter drunk was as versatile as Fechter sober, the real intoxication of *Don Cæsar de Bazan* being totally different in expression from that assumed by the French gentleman, *Frédéric de Marsan*.

"DON CÆSAR DE BAZAN."

THE text of "Don Cæsar" refers to the vagabond nobleman as "this sottish mummer," and Lemaître, the great personator of *chevaliers d'industrie*, who first produced the drama, was wont to make *Don Cæsar* very drunk; while the elder Wallack, the original of the English version, — "the most effective personator of the hero, if not the most agreeable," says the London *Athenæum*, — descended to the vulgarity of hiccoughing. Assuredly there is no authority for this license. *Don Cæsar* has lost none of his wits, he is capable of fighting skilfully enough to kill a captain. Wine has made him familiar, affectionately demonstrative, somewhat doubtful as to his centre of gravity, and that is all. Fechter went no further, and was so delicately unctuous in this bibulous mood as to cause regret upon his returning to a normal condition. Nothing could be neater in its humor than Fechter's panto-

mime when, in referring to his creditors and remarking, "Most of them have children, creditors *will* have children, heirs to their ledgers," he indicated by the airiest motion *stairs* of children ascending from earth to heaven. Equally good was the broader humor of his funniest point when wrestling with a word of five syllables. "How human nature has de-gen-er — "

"Rated," added *Don José*, coming to the rescue.

"Thank you," replied *Don Cæsar*, shaking him tenderly by the hand, with inexpressible drollery, "it 's a long word." Like all his other points, it was original.

Throughout the first two acts Fechter was champagne in human form. The grace of his audacity supplied the place of virtue, and the "good fellow" was so good that reformation became a foregone conclusion. A notable feature in Fechter's acting was the artistic employment of the baldest stage accessories. When he sat down the chair became vitalized, and immediately played an effective and thoroughly appropriate part. Thus, upon *Don José's* intimating that *Don Cæsar* would die on the gallows, the noble vagabond started up, and, seizing the chair while exclaiming, "But a rope like a thief!" raised it aloft as if to hurl it at the power which could so insult him. Though only a wooden chair, there was dignity and passion in the pose, and the action entirely harmonized with the hidalgo's hot blood. Fechter's *Don Cæsar* treated wine as if it really had wooed and won him. As he inhaled its aroma the cup seemed to brim with the true descendant of the vine, and when he next spoke his voice was flavored with it!

During the drinking chorus, it was Fechter's easy pantomime, not the singing, that interested, and when in the midst of the revelry the clock struck half-past six, Fechter made a neat point by putting his finger in his ear, as if to shut out destiny. Are these things trivial? Not so trivial but they constitute the difference between letter and spirit. In the interviews between the *Marchioness of Santa Cruz* and *Don Cæsar*, Fechter's gesticulation and facial expression added rich sauce to the admirable situation, while the scene between *Don Cæsar* and the *King*, in the last act, was rendered inimitable by Fechter's manner. "If you are Don Cæsar de Bazan, *I* am the King of Spain!" Placing his hat on his head at an angle of audacious coolness, Fechter took the stage, and, fanning himself with his pocket handkerchief, swaggered to the foot-lights with an indescribable mock-heroic air that inspired several rounds of applause. Authority declares that both Lemaître and the elder Wallack made their point here by sitting opposite the *King*, and touching the spring of a spiral feather in their hats, which gradually rose and nodded familiarly to astounded royalty. Such loud burlesque is unwarrantable, and Fechter showed wisdom in not overstepping the line of comedy. The closing scenes of the acting within the acting were masterly strokes, as indicative of the artist as Giotto's drawing of the circle.

"THE CORSICAN BROTHERS."

FAR less worthy of Fechter was the drama of "The Corsican Brothers;" not because it is melodramatic for, saving the apparitions, there is nothing that does not hold the mirror up to Corsican nature (and in these days of Spiritualism who shall say that apparitions are impossible?) but because there is hardly sufficient body to the drama. Fechter's *Fabien* and *Louis dei Franchi* were distinct and complete personations; but, remembering *Hamlet*, they were the condescensions of a king. That the general public preferred Dumas to Shakespeare was pitiable for artist and critic. Despite all cavilling, however, Fechter's face never spoke more telling, significant language than during two moments of "The Corsican Brothers," — the first when he repelled the audacity of *Celestine*, with such a look of withering contempt as would blanch the cheek of the most degraded of women; the second when, stepping between *Émilie de Lesparre* and *Chateau Renaud*, upon being appealed to by the former for protection, he completely cowed the braggart by a language of the eye that defies description and completely does away with the necessity of speech. Nothing could have been more quiet, more gentlemanly, and yet more telling. Applause followed instantaneously, even from "the gods," proving that in the good time coming the popular taste may relish something better than ranting. Fechter's Corsican dress for *Fabien* was a study, perfect in every ap-

pointment — even to the ear-rings and the tobacco-pouch from which he manufactured cigarettes as he sat on the table and related the peculiarities of his family. Those who watched narrowly remarked that as *Louis*, Fechter wore no cravat, but fastened his collar with a gold stud. Strange, for a Parisian who was so perfectly dressed in other respects. Then it was remembered that in Corsica, and even in Southern France, cravats are ignored!

A picture of the times stood on the stage; and, in the hand-to-hand conflict that closes the drama, the audience beheld a hot-blooded Corsican tiger thirsting for revenge, fighting with all the skill and litheness of a creature brought up among mountains and *vendette*. For the first time too, in America, "The Corsican Brothers" was played as originally written. Prior to Fechter's advent the second act had been made the first, owing to a mistake of the English publisher, who accidentally reversed the order of the acts, in which order Charles Kean introduced the drama to the London public.

"MONTE CRISTO."

When Fechter first appeared in his dramatization of Dumas's famous novel, many variations were heard on the well-worn theme of the sensational drama. Is not a vast deal of nonsense written and talked thereon? It would be supposed, from the manner in which Shake-

speare is lauded and melodrama derided, that the Swan of Avon swam in the most placid of mill-streams, whereas there never lived a dramatist who showed so great a mastery of effects. There is not a play of his, holding the stage, that is not in the truest sense sensational; and Shakespeare is acted, not because of his poetry, but because of his knowledge of situations and how to command the interest of an audience. "Hamlet" is full of sensation. Murder most foul and unnatural precedes it, a ghost stalks abroad in the first act, there is murder again in the third act, a mad scene and drowning in the fourth, unlimited poisoning and stabbing in the fifth act. What more sensational than *Othello's* smothering of *Desdemona?* What more thoroughly melodramatic than the tragedy of "Macbeth?" What more opposed to nature than "Midsummer Night's Dream" and the "Tempest?" And are "Richard III." and "King Lear" pastoral poems? When Shakespeare forgets his effects he becomes a poet merely, and his plays, like those of Ben Jonson and others, are read, not acted. The theatre demands situations first, language second. The difference between Shakespeare and the highest order of sensational dramatist is that one has great genius and the other great cleverness. One is a poet as well as a playwright, and the other is merely a playwright. One ennobles his plot by the beauty of his verse; the other belittles it by the vulgarity of his dialogue. One endows his meanest characters with intellect far beyond what each type possesses in real life; the other gives even his heroes nothing but "situations." The greater

includes the less, but the less does not include the greater. If, then, Shakespeare be good authority, melodrama is thoroughly legitimate. The sensational actor is he who produces a sensation. An audience cannot be excited without being thrilled. It cannot be thrilled without being made to feel. An actor cannot make others feel without feeling himself. He cannot feel without possessing what is called genius. It is quite possible to be a good melodramatic actor and not be able to properly interpret Shakespeare ; but the actor who takes a modern melodrama and, lifting it out of its absurdity, raises it to an ideal height, stands as an actor very near where Shakespeare stands as a dramatist. If an actor makes the impossible appear real, he has the imagination of a poet and gives evidence of greater ability than if he were personating an every-day hero.

For this reason he is mistaken who fancies that anything less than greatness produced Fechter's effect in "Monte Cristo." It would be as absurd to deny Ristori's genius in *Sister Térésa*, in *Elizabeth*, and *Marie Antoinette*. "Mrs. Siddons was quite as great in *Mrs. Beverley* and *Isabella* as in *Lady Macbeth* and *Queen Katharine;* yet no one, we apprehend, will say that the poetry is equal," says captious Hazlitt, — whose criticism applies to Fechter in the melodramas of "The Duke's Motto," "Corsican Brothers," and his own version of "Monte Cristo." It requires most natural acting to create reality under the ribs of improbability. When brought out in London, Fechter's "Monte Cristo" ran for one hundred nights. It was deservedly successful,

as it is the work of a clever playwright. Ignoring the popular taste for pageantry, Fechter put aside the wondrous cave of *Monte Cristo* which plays so prominent a part in the published drama, gave but passing mention to the gorgeous *Princess Haidee*, introduced comparatively few characters, told but one of the many stories that make up the romance, told this story decisively, and did not hesitate to take liberties with the original plot for the sake of dramatic effect. Thus, for example, instead of being *Villefort's* father, *Noirtier* became his half-brother; by which change the dramatist could, without visitings of conscience, render *Villefort* doubly treacherous toward *Noirtier*. *Mercedes* did not marry *Fernand* until eighteen years after the disappearance of *Edmond Dantes*. *Albert de Morcerf* encountered *Dantes* disguised as an abbé, at a roadside inn, instead of meeting him in Rome as the *Count of Monte Cristo*. The youth's life was saved by *Dantes* in Africa, not in Rome, and all of *Dantes's* enemies came to most dramatic grief before the final moment that witnessed the triumph of long-suffering virtue in the union of *Mercedes*, *Dantes*, and their son. These were a few of the many transformations in an old friend's features. The entire first act was a condensation of Dumas's first two chapters. The drama was no worse in dialogue than the "Corsican Brothers." Occasional slips of phraseology attested its French origin, — slips so palpable as to render their retention more than strange. The plot was good, but, oddly enough, Fechter actually failed to make his own hero as all-pervading as his audiences desired.

In the first act Fechter was every inch a sailor; in the second his prison "make up" was admirable. In the third act, his disguise as an abbé was most artistic, and his acting worthy of his dress; but it was not until the fourth act that he gave himself an opportunity for the display of his best genius. In the garb of the *Count of Monte Cristo* he was the perfection of manner and neat acting. No actor can personate high comedy unless he have the instincts of a gentleman. Fechter's interview with *Mercedes* was marked by all the intense passion for which his name was a synonyme; and the action and facial expression with which he recognized, in *Albert de Morcerf*, his own son was so thrillingly magnetic as to be received with call upon call. The fifth act exhibited Fechter's consummate skill in fencing, and when the curtain fell it fell upon the last of a series of fine tableaux. From the beginning to the end of the drama the massing of colors and disposition of figures denoted Fechter's complete knowledge of his profession, which commanded for him the respect of all who appreciate its rarity. Draughtsman no less than author and actor, Fechter's handiwork was visible in the designs for the scenery so beautifully painted. There has seldom been seen on any stage a finer work of art than the interior and exterior of Chateau d'If, the island prison in which *Dantes* is buried alive, as presented at the Globe Theatre, Boston. The foreground disclosed the dungeons of *Dantes* and *Abbé Faria*, with ramparts above, on which a guard patroled; in the background the chateau's gloomy tower frowned upon the cliff beneath and the threaten-

ing sky above. By sinking the dungeons the interior speedily disappeared, and then the previously brewing storm broke out. Lightning, thunder, rain, and wind were so real as to deceive the acutest eyes and ears. Fechter's devices in conjuring the elements, especially water, were those of a wizard. Angry waves dashed to and fro, and amidst this war of nature two guards, bearing the supposed dead body of *Faria*, but in theatrical reality that of the living *Dantes*, slowly ascended the steep steps leading to the summit of the cliff, where the body was hurled into the sea. Guards disappeared; the storm lulled; *Dantes* rose to the surface of the water, climbed to the top of a rock, fell on his knees, and, extending his arms towards heaven, exclaimed with electrifying passion: "Saved! Mine the treasures of Monte Cristo! The world is mine!" Gustave Doré, in his best moment, could not improve this picture. Scenery without acting is a Barmecide feast. With Fechter it was an exquisite frame, setting off the painting of an artist.

RECOLLECTIONS OF CHARLES FECHTER.

BY

EDMUND YATES,

HERMAN VEZIN,

AND

WILKIE COLLINS.

EXPLANATORY NOTE.

EVER since I have had ears to hear I have been told that, wonderful as women may be in instinct, they are totally without reason. Being creatures of emotion, loving or hating from impulse, they lack the judicial element, and consequently are incapable of genuine criticism. I am a woman, and what I have written of Fechter the Artist is doomed to be attributed, by some at least, to the fervid fancy of a female partisan; though I am no partisan, though Fechter and I were strangers in his closing years. It is a coincidence that the words, "Remember me," written for me by Fechter, on a beautiful crayon head of himself as *Hamlet*, should have faded out of sight about the time that the giver proved unkind.

He is base indeed who allows his estimate of an artist to be warped by personal feelings. Fechter was no less great in his art when he turned his back on his friends; and my enthusiasm is as warm to-day as when he first revealed himself. No one has taken his place. In vain have I sought to find his peer at the Comédie Française and elsewhere in Paris. No Fechter has arisen, and the Romantic Drama languishes. "I'd almost be willing to be twenty years older for the sake of having seen him in his prime, when he

played *Armand Duval* with Madame Doche," exclaims a woman and a critic. What greater sacrifice than this could a woman make to art? To add twenty years to her age! "The last time I saw Fechter," continues this critic, "was in Philadelphia, one year before he died. I was standing in front of the Continental Hotel as he went down Ninth Street, wearing a long frock coat buttoned to the chin, and a low-crowned broad-brimmed beaver hat. I don't know which he the more resembled, priest or planter, but there was a distinction about him that was impressive, and it did not seem right to let him pass by without some sort of demonstration."

Because I am a woman, — because I know how many enemies Fechter the Man made in this country, and how few are willing in consequence to do him justice, — I have appealed to critics in England to place themselves on record for art's sake. No better judges of acting live than the three men who generously respond. As good wine needs no bush, the names of Wilkie Collins and Edmund Yates need no introduction. It is our misfortune though not our fault that, American though he be, Herman Vezin should have won his laurels upon the English stage, and only be known to his travelled countrymen. Standing in the front rank of his profession, Herman Vezin is a rare example of culture and probity. Of such stuff should all actors be made.

KATE FIELD.

EDMUND YATES ON CHARLES FECHTER.

THE first time I ever saw Fechter on the stage was in the spring of 1852, when I was a young man of twenty, highly impressionable, and devoted to the drama. He played *Armand* in the "Dame aux Camélias," with Madame Doche as heroine. I thought it then a most striking performance, and it still remains so in my memory. *Armand* is what actors call merely a "feeder" to *Marguerite*, — save in one act, when he turns upon her; and there Fechter, in his alternating rage, love, and despair, was almost sublime. I made his personal acquaintance when he first came to England, about the year 1859 or 1860, and as I was then living in his immediate neighborhood, in St. John's Wood, we were thrown much together, and became very intimate.

Another neighbor and prominent member of our circle was the Rev. J. N. Bellew, at that time incumbent of St. Mark's, Hamilton Terrace, an enthusiastic Shakespearian, to whom unquestionably Fechter was greatly indebted for much of the best of his conception of *Hamlet*. At the time I speak of, and for several years afterwards, Fechter was the most abstemious of

men ; he ate sparingly, and never drank anything but a little claret and water. He was most domestic in his habits, and devoted to his two children, — especially to his son, little Paul. His health was not good ; he had some extraordinary complaint which no one could ever get at, but which had the effect of causing a sudden swelling — as he described it, "a gonflement" — of the stomach, which caused him much pain and frequently incapacitated him from acting.

At such times he would go to bed and lie there moaning dismally, with his head tied up in a handkerchief, with a cataplasm on his stomach, tisane to drink, and all those weak and washy solaces and medicaments with which a sick Frenchman loves to surround himself.

He was the best love-maker I ever saw on the stage ; he threw his whole heart and soul into it, and made love not merely in words but with the inflections of his voice, with his attitudes, with his eyes. *Ruy Blas* was unquestionably his best part. It had no blot. His love for the *Queen* was most charmingly expressed ; and in the last act of rage and vengeance on the traitor he was positively sublime. Mounet-Sully, who is the present *Ruy Blas* of the Comédie Française, and who appeared in England with Sara Bernhardt, is not to be compared to Fechter. I am afraid Lewes is right about his *Othello*. It was a desperately poor performance, full of French tricks and nonsense ; but, on the other hand, his *Iago* was admirable. "Hamlet" was the play with which he made most money. He had extraordinary dramatic power off the stage. Many and many a time he has kept me up till two or three in

the morning, telling the plot of some piece which he intended to produce, and walking about the room, acting each scene and each character. He had a most unhappy knack of quarrelling with people, — often those with whom he had been most intimate.

I recollect Dickens saying to me of him once that he had never met anybody with greater appreciative power of reading character. "He seemed," Dickens said, "to combine a man's insight with a woman's instinct."

EDMUND YATES.

HERMAN VEZIN ON CHARLES FECHTER.

FECHTER made an immediate and decided hit. There was a vivacity, a charm, a grace and fervor in his acting which — impregnated as it was with his French manner — struck us all as so fresh and original that he became the talk of London. Harris, the manager, had taken care to have him surrounded with the best procurable talent, and the new scenery and dresses for "Ruy Blas" — Falconer's translation — were most complete in design and rich in material. Nothing was left undone that could aid his success. Fechter himself had passed some time in London prior to his appearance, making many friends and exciting curiosity amongst those whose opinion would be of value to him.

I was introduced to Fechter soon after his appearance. His manner of clinging to one's hand and looking with his beautiful eyes into one's own, as if this moment was the one he had lived for, was very fetching; and charming he undoubtedly was until you quarrelled with him, and then —

"Ruy Blas" was succeeded by "Don Cæsar de Bazan," "The Golden Dagger," etc., none of which

plays did more than confirm Fechter's fame. At last he played *Hamlet*, and took the town by storm. His appearance, his easy grace, his freedom from the vice of mouthing, his unstilted style, delighted all but the most bigoted adherents of the stagey school of acting. I sat in the stalls at one of the rehearsals, and was much struck by his manner of always thinking the thought of *Hamlet* before he spoke the words. I said to him, "You are going to make a great hit in this part." Years afterwards he recalled my words, and added, "You were the only one who encouraged me." It was amusing to observe the absurd forms the enthusiasm he excited sometimes took. I watched two women one night, panting and gasping with ecstasy; and, as Fechter left the stage, one of them exclaimed, "Why, he even speaks English better than an English actor!" A critic of some prominence remarked very sagely, "Why should Mr. Fechter be reproached for acting *Hamlet* with a foreign accent? for, after all, *Hamlet* was not an Englishman." "Hamlet" had a run, unprecedented at that time, of seventy-five nights. Soon after this, Fechter took the Lyceum Theatre.

Whether he was backed by a wealthy admirer or not, I don't know; but he went to work as if he had been possessed of a Fortunatus purse. He engaged Phelps, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mathews, and Walter Montgomery, — none of whom ever appeared at his theatre. His first production, "The Duke's Motto," which he had expected to run a few weeks only, ran a whole season, to immense business. He then recon-

structed his stage and machinery, importing a posse of French carpenters to show the Englishmen how to work the machinery. One of them, after putting a piece of scenery into its proper place, turned to his English brother and said, "Comme ça!" The next night the English carpenter did the work, the Frenchman looking on to supervise. The English brother above alluded to, on repeating the work of the Frenchman, looked up at the piece of scenery he had just handled, and muttered: "Comme ça! You can't get on with this —— scenery unless you speak French to it!"

Nothing could exceed the exquisite beauty and skill of Fechter's stage management. I played with him in "The Master of Ravenswood," "Hamlet," and "The Corsican Brothers," and I found him perfectly unselfish and an artist "aux bouts des ongles." He never thought of depending entirely upon himself. He engaged the best actors he could get, and spared no expense in scenery and appointments. He never sacrificed another actor to himself on the stage. Every one had his chance, and he must have been a dullard who did not profit by his invaluable hints.

Fechter was essentially a great expert. His art presented no difficulties he could not surmount. It must be confessed, however, that when an author's creation was beyond his grasp, he dragged the author down to his own level, as was the case in *Othello*, the greatest of parts; but even in this failure he did things which were exquisite in their grace and finish.

As Dickens said, Fechter had a genius for quarrel-

ling, and no doubt his ungovernable temper was the primary cause of his downfall. Any opposition seemed to make him mad, and in these fits he would ruthlessly insult his best friends so grossly as to make all reconciliation impossible, even if he had sought it; but this he never did. It was a wonder that he never quarrelled with Dickens.

His character was not without reproach; but he has left his mark on the stage, and all actors who had the intelligence to appreciate him, owe him an artistic debt. His *Iago* was much liked and was highly artistic, but none of his Shakespearian attempts equalled his *Hamlet*. Hermann Hendrich was, in my opinion, the very finest *Hamlet* I have ever seen. Still, Fechter will rank high in the roll of great actors who have excelled in that character.

HERMAN VEZIN.

WILKIE COLLINS'S RECOLLECTIONS OF CHARLES FECHTER.

I FIRST saw Fechter in Paris nearly thirty years since, on the stage of the old Vaudeville Theatre. He had then lately achieved one of the great triumphs of his art, by playing the part of *Armand Duval* in the first, and (speaking in a dramatic sense) the best of the plays of Alexander Dumas the younger, — "La Dame aux Camélias."

When he came to London, in 1860, to act, for the first time in the English language, in a translation of "Ruy Blas," we were made personally known to one another.

By common impulse we dispensed with the tentative formalities of acquaintance, and became friends from that day to the day of Fechter's death.

I have been asked to write my recollections of this admirable actor and delightful companion. It is useless to conceal that this is a melancholy task. I must look back at some of those happiest days of my life, which are days that I can never see again; and I must write composedly and impartially — if I can — of a friend who held a place in my regard which has never since been filled.

Such remembrances as I can offer to readers with propriety divide themselves, to my mind, into two parts. Permit me to call them FECHTER IN PUBLIC and FECHTER IN PRIVATE.

FECHTER IN PUBLIC.

It has been said, most truly, that the art of the actor dies with him.

No description of acting, by a person who has seen the player, can convey any distinct idea to the mind of a person who has not seen the player. For example, it has not been our good fortune to go to the theatre in the time of the great Garrick. What do we know of his acting, from the many careful and conscientious descriptions of it which have appeared in print? We know absolutely nothing but the result. In tragedy and comedy alike, Garrick delighted everybody who was fortunate enough to see him.

To take another example, — Macready, in his youth, had the honor of acting with Mrs. Siddons. He played *Norval* to her *Lady Randolph* in the tragedy of "Douglas."

I once asked him if he could tell me anything which would give me some idea of her acting. He answered: "I can only tell you this; in the scene in which she recognizes *Norval* as her lost son she gave me a hug that hurt me, and I felt her tears dropping on my face." Let it not be forgotten that she must, at this late date in her career, have played *Lady Randolph* during the theatrical engagements of many years, — and we derive

from such testimony as this the vague idea of a grand passionate actress, so absolutely identified with her part that no frequency of repetition could weaken or degrade her performance. But do we advance a step farther? Do we hear the tones which gave a charm, not its own, to the prosy poetry of the play?

Do we see the beautiful face expressing the pathetic exultation of maternal love? Can we, in the remotest degree, feel what the audience must have felt when her tears dropped on Macready's face? We know no more about it than that much injured man, the ex-king of the Zulus.

For these good reasons I shall not waste words in any attempt to revive the dead and buried influences of Fechter's acting by describing it in detail. Those unfortunate people who have not seen him must remain in their darkness. Nothing can now enlighten them.

Speaking of his acting in general terms only, I may say that it was noble and romantic,—with this inestimable merit added, that it was always firmly founded on truth to nature. His style was, to use the painter's phrase, broad.

In his least successful efforts he always avoided that excessive accumulation of detail which still deteriorates so much good acting in these later days. In the all-important accomplishment of "making love" on the stage he was rivalled by but one man, in my dramatic experience, — and that man was always helped by music, — the irresistible Mario.

Fechter's knowledge of his art, and his eye for dramatic effect, made him invaluable at rehearsal.

He was an excellent adviser when a new play was in course of production, — to the writer as well as to the performers. There are living actors and actresses who can still bear witness, on the stage, to an advance in their art due to his teaching and example, which has worthily raised them in the estimation of the public. The Miss Kate Terry (of those days), Miss Carlotta Leclercq (still on the stage), were, as actresses, almost created anew by their dramatic association with Fechter. No foreigner ever grappled more resolutely and successfully than he did with the difficulties of the English language. He told me that to speak with ease and propriety the one line in *Hamlet's* soliloquy, "What 's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?" was a labor of weeks. Allowing all due force to the influence of such determined application as this, the secret of his instantaneous success, when he first stepped on our stage in the character of an English actor, lay really and truly in his consummate knowledge of his art.

Long before we, in front of the curtain, had discovered what he could do in *Ruy Blas* as an actor, we had only to observe his movements, his manner, his by-play, to be free from the slightest apprehension of his breaking down under the hard stress of speaking to us in our language.

As to the relative value of Fechter's performances in England, I believe I only express the general opinion when I place *Ruy Blas* and *Hamlet* in the front rank.

With regard to Victor Hugo's powerful play, I do not hesitate to say (speaking from an experience which, be it remembered, does not include Edmund Kean) that

Fechter's *Ruy Blas* was the nearest approach to perfection, as a performance in romantic drama, that we have seen in England in later years, — reserving the one exception of the one supremely great actor, Fréderic Lemaître. Speaking next of *Hamlet*, I will only venture to give my evidence as a witness. From Macready downward I have, I think, seen every *Hamlet* of any note and mark during the last five and thirty years. The true *Hamlet* I first saw when Fechter stepped on the stage. These words, if they merely expressed my own opinion, it is needless to say would never have been written. But they express the opinion of every unprejudiced person, under fifty years of age, with whom I have met. For that reason, let the words stand.

In the long list of his performances of the second order — or, to speak more exactly, in characters of secondary importance from the theatrical point of view — I may specify *Monte Cristo*, *Edgar* in an adaptation of the immortal "Bride of Lammermoor," *Claude Melnotte* in the "Lady of Lyons," the double characters in "The Duke's Motto" (names forgotten), *Obenreizer* in "No Thoroughfare," and *Maurice de Layrac* in "Black and White."

Approaching once more the throne of Shakespeare, I should add that I have heard almost universal praise of Fechter's *Iago*, — which I did not see, — and that I have nothing to say of his *Othello* except to express my regret that I *did* see it. The sooner that unfortunate performance is buried in oblivion, the better.

All that I can usefully write of my friend in his pub-

lic capacity has now come to an end. Having already described him as a master of his art, I have implied that he set the mark of invention and fancy of a high order on his management of the stage. Costume and scenery, color and grouping, theatrical effect as assisted by paints, powders, and wigs, — all felt his influence for good. These attendant merits deserve to be specially mentioned. They rank among the minor means which helped him to his brilliant success in England. The drawbacks to that success behind the scenes — the mortification that he suffered from the jealousy and ingratitude of some of his professional brethren — I purposely pass over. No foul tongues can reach him now. The consecration of Death holds him sacred from insult.

FECHTER IN PRIVATE.

One of the worst vices of the age we live in is the shameless disregard of truth prevalent among friends, writing or speaking in public, of celebrated persons whom they have survived. Unblushing exaggeration of the merits, position, and influence of the dead man seems to be considered as sufficient warrant for a deliberate concealment of his failings and faults, — which is nothing less than lying of the passive sort, artfully adapted to its purpose as a pedestal on which the writer or speaker can present himself to the public in a favorable light. Persons in general wishing, in the case of a famous man deceased, to find out what sort of man he really was, are in these days invited to look at a fancy portrait (greasy with the varnish of fulsome praise)

in place of a true likeness; and, worse still, are pestered by the appearance of the begging-box, sent round by public advertisement, in the interests of a posthumous glory shining with a false light.

Trifling as they may be, these recollections of Fechter shall deceive no one. They shall present the side of his character which deserves blame as faithfully as they present the side of his character which deserves praise.

Telling the truth for truth's sake, I may serve one useful purpose at least. I may perhaps relieve innocent people from reports which have cruelly and ignorantly associated them with the disasters of the closing years of my friend's life.

The serious defects of Fechter's character were two in number. The first of these his friends viewed with regret. From the second, they could only turn away in despair.

I have met with many children who had a clearer idea then he possessed of pecuniary responsibilities. When he wanted money he borrowed it of the first friend whom he met, with the firmest imaginary belief in his capacity to make repayment at the shortest possible date. Under the same delusion he allowed greedy adventurers, in want of supplies, to involve him in debt with tradespeople by making their purchases in his name. His sympathy with worthier friends in a state of pecuniary embarrassment was boundless. When he had no money to spare, and he was asked for a loan of "a few hundred pounds," he had no hesitation in borrowing the money from the friend who had it, and handing the sum over to the friend who had it not.

When I remonstrated with him, he was always ready with his answer. "My dear Wilkie, you know I love you. Do you think I should love you if I didn't firmly believe that you would do just the same thing in my place?" He might have ended, poor fellow, by putting me in the wrong in a better way than this; he might have paid all his debts, and died with a mind at ease, but for that second defect in his character, to which it is now my hard duty to allude.

The curse of an ungovernable temper was the curse of Fechter's life.

I am not speaking of mere outbreaks of furious anger. He was too sensitive and too generous a man not to be able to atone for forgetting himself in this way, as soon as his composure was restored. But, when he once took offence, a lurking devil saturated his whole being with the poison of unjust suspicion and inveterate hatred; and that devil, the better influences about him, distrusted rather than encouraged by himself, were powerless to cast out.

I have no heart to dwell on the number of friends (honestly admiring him, eager to serve him, guiltless of consciously offending him) whom he estranged forever, — self-deceived by his own impulsive misinterpretation of motives, or misled by false reports which he had no patience to examine before he accepted them as truths. When he first fascinated American audiences (there is no exaggeration of his influence in using that word) he was offered, by formal agreement, pecuniary prospects which would have assured to him, as the reward for a few years' exercise of his art, a more than

sufficient income for life. He quarrelled with the man, the thoroughly honest and responsible man, who made him that offer. At a little social gathering, in the United States, the friend thus estranged said to me, "To this day, I don't know what I did to give offence."

Other persons present were surprised to see that he spoke with tears in his eyes. I, who knew the irresistible attraction of Fechter, when he was in possession of himself, understood and respected that honest distress. It is useless to pursue this subject by citing other examples. When Fechter died in poverty, far away from relatives and friends in the Old World, it is not true — I assert it from what I myself had opportunities of knowing — it is not true to say that the miserable end was due to connections which he formed in the United States. The one enemy to his prosperity was the enemy in himself. He paid the penalty of his ungovernable temper, — and no man can own it with truer sorrow than the man who has reluctantly written these lines.

Let us pass into a brighter atmosphere. Before we leave him, let us see him at his best.

The sensitive nature of the man — undoubtedly the motive-power of the all-attractive social influence by which his friends delight to remember him — showed itself noticeable in what I may call the private practice of his art. He will be, perhaps, most intelligibly revealed in this aspect, if I consult my own experience of him at a time when we were engaged together in preparing a play for the stage.

I had the honor of writing the Christmas story called "No Thoroughfare" in literary association with Charles Dickens. We invented the story at Gadshill, in the Swiss châlet which had been Fechter's gift to Dickens. When our last page of manuscript had been set up in type, I returned to other literary labors which had been suspended in favor of "No Thoroughfare," and which kept me so closely employed that I saw nothing of my brethren in art for some little time. During this interval Fechter had read the proof-sheets, had (to use his own phrase) "fallen madly in love with the subject," and had prepared a *scenario* or outline of a dramatic adaptation of the story, under Dickens's superintendence and approval. This done, Dickens took his departure for the United States, leaving the destinies of the unwritten play safe, as he kindly said, in my hands. Fechter next presented himself with the *scenario*, laid the manuscript on my desk, offered me a pen with a low bow, and said: "Dickens has gone away for six months; he will find 'No Thoroughfare' running when he comes back." For once, in this case, a modern prophecy was actually fulfilled.

The play written, — a far harder task than I had anticipated, requiring such new presentation of some of the persons of the story as almost involved the re-creating of them, — Fechter at once assumed the character of *Obenreizer* in private life. When he entered his study or mine, it was an entrance on the stage. He ate and drank "in character" when he dined with me or I dined with him. The play was in his hands all day and at his bedside all night. At rehearsal he was quite

ready to perform every other character in the drama, by way of an example which might brighten and improve the business on the stage. Once or twice the overwhelming nervous excitement that possessed him showed itself in a curiously suggestive way; his English speech betrayed, for the first time in my experience, that he was thinking in French.

When the memorable day arrived, and a few hours only interposed between us and the ordeal of the first night, that terrible form of nervous prostration called stage fright — from which all good actors suffer, more or less, at their first appearance in a new part — began its attack on Fechter at breakfast time.

He could eat nothing, not even the French garlic sausage which offered the one attainable refuge to his stomach on other occasions. Pale, silent, subdued, he sat in a corner of the room, and looked like a man waiting the appearance of the sheriff to conduct him to the scaffold. I handed him his pipe; he was not even able to smoke. "Are you going in front to see your play?" he asked, with a look of blank despair. I could honestly answer that my nerves were never strong enough to endure that trial on the first night. "You will be behind the scenes, then?" "Yes." "For God's sake, come to my room!"

Before the performance began, I went accordingly to Fechter's room.

Dressed, as to the lower part of him only, for the character of *Obenreizer*, he sat helplessly staring into a white basin, held before him by his attendant in the attitude of a sailor on a channel steamer comforting a

suffering lady. "Here 's Mr. Fechter sick, sir," said the man, "and nothing in him to bring up." (The reader will, I hope, pardon this literal report in consideration of its absolute fidelity to the truth.) I said a comforting word, and proposed a few drops of laudanum. Unable to speak, Fechter answered by putting out his tongue. The color of it had turned, under the nervous terror that possessed him, to the metallic blackness of the tongue of a parrot. When the overture began, — easily audible in the dressing-room, — another attack made the basin necessary.

In the interval that followed, *Obenreizer's* upper garments were put on, and the last touches were added to his head and face. The next sound that reached us was the well deserved applause which greeted the appearance of that admirable actor and worthy kind-hearted man, Benjamin Webster, in the character of *Joey Ladle*. Fechter gave me one expressive look, and turned to the basin again. His colleague's entrance on the stage preceded his own entrance by no very long space of time. Soon the knock was heard at the door, and the dreadful voice of the call-boy summoned Mr. Fechter to be ready. He took my arm to descend the stairs which led from his room to the stage. Our procession of two was completed by the attendant with his basin ready, — and, what is more, wanted, at the critical moment when we stood behind the door through which *Obenreizer* was to make his appearance. Some one near me whispered, "Good heavens, he will be taken ill before the audience!" I whispered back, "Wait and see." In another minute the words were spoken which gave him the cue.

"Ask Mr. Obenreizer to step this way." The door was briskly opened; the glare of the footlights shone on the favorite of the public; the round of applause at the sight of him rang out all over the crowded theatre. In an instant the moral courage, which had deserted him behind the scenes, rallied its forces in the presence of the audience. Fechter's first words proved him to be in full possession of all his resources. The stranger who had predicted such terrible results lifted his eyebrows in mute amazement. The attendant and the basin vanished together.

"No Thoroughfare" had a run of two hundred nights. We were not so fortunate in making our next joint appeal to the public, in the drama called "Black and White."

Fechter's lively mind was, to use his own expression, "full of plots." He undertook to tell me stories enough for all the future novels and plays that I could possibly live to write. His power of invention was unquestionably remarkable; but his method of narration was so confused that it was not easy to follow him, and his respect for those terrible obstacles in the way of free imagination known as probabilities was, to say the least of it, in some need of improvement.

One of his plots, however, he presented intelligibly in the form of a *scenario*. The story, as I thought and still think, was full of dramatic interest. Following Fechter's outline in the first two acts, and suggesting a new method of concluding the story, to which he agreed, I wrote the drama called "Black and White," being solely responsible for the conception and devel-

opment of the characters, and for the dialogue attributed to them.

This work, presented for the first time to the public at the Adelphi Theatre, London, on the 29th of March, 1869, was received by the audience of the first night with tumultuous applause, Fechter's performance of the principal part being even finer than his performance of *Obenreizer*.

As a play, "Black and White" was considered by my literary brethren (and justly considered) to be better work than "No Thoroughfare." We left the theatre with the fairest prospect of another run of six months. But, after some few weeks the regular Adelphi audience reminded us gently, by means of vacant places in the theatre, of an objection to the play which had never once occurred to either of us. We had completely forgotten the popular mania of seventeen years before, satirized by the French as *Oncle Tommerie*. Almost every theatre in Great Britain had, in those days, provided an adaptation of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." It mattered nothing that the scene of "Black and White" was laid far away from the United States, in the Island of Trinidad, and that not one of the persons of the drama recalled the characters in Mrs. Stowe's novel in the slightest degree. Mrs. Stowe's subject was slavery, and our subject was slavery; and even the long-suffering English public had had enough of it.

We had had enough of it, in our different way, after the piece had been performed about sixty nights. What would the scene-painters, carpenters, property-men, and supernumeraries, who now make dramas for

the theatre, assisted, it is right to add, by a handy occasional person called an author, — what would these collaborators say to a run of sixty nights? They would say: "You made a great mistake; address the eyes, ears, and noses of the audience, and (consciously or unconsciously) you may reproduce anything that has been done before; but if you *will* meddle with the minds of the audience, then they begin to think, and no theatrical human being can answer for the consequences."

Enough, by this time, of the stage, — even in recollections of an actor.

There is a little villa in the northwestern suburb of London, close to the eastward extremity of St. John's Wood Road, which I can never pass now without a feeling of sadness. It is the last house inhabited by Fechter during his sojourn in England. Here we feasted and laughed and revelled in some of the brightest social enjoyments that life can afford. What a dreadful barrenness stares at me from those doors and windows now!

The conventional restraints of society have a use and a value which are not to be denied. But it is equally indisputable that they exact burdensome observances from men in want of recreation after that hardest of all work, which is the work of the brain done in the service of the arts. The formal assumption of evening dress, the introductions to strangers, the effort of conversation, the necessity of listening with the same polite attention to tiresome people and agreeable people alike, — these and other social sacrifices, so easy to

the idle or the lightly employed guest, exact a merciless strain on the nerves of a man whose fancy and imagination, whose utmost creative powers, have been heavily taxed for hours together. He has made himself agreeable, he has enlarged his circle of acquaintances, he has perhaps strengthened his influence among certain classes; but he has not rested after his work, and he knows it when he rises the next morning.

After his arrival in England, Fechter's success won him his entrance into society. He was welcome everywhere, and he made himself worthy of his reception in the best sense of the word. But the time came when he felt the strain on his resources. He applied the remedy; he folded up his dress coat; he threw away his white cravat. Thenceforth, when he had his free evenings, he offered up polite apologies on the altar of society, and enjoyed himself, as the wise populace expresses it, in his own way.

Sometimes he dined with his friends, and oftener his friends dined with him. In either case we were as independent of formalities as the monks of Theleme themselves. But one rule existed; punctuality to the dinner-hour was insisted on. I record it with pride; the one act of folly never committed by any one of us was the folly of waiting for a late guest.

The evenings at Fechter's house present the best picture of Fechter.

In the summer time his guests generally found him waiting for them in the front garden, in his dressing-gown and slippers. The Frenchwoman who cooked for him — one of the finest artists that ever handled a

saucepan — came out to tell us when dinner was ready. Nobody (the master of the house included) had any special place at the table, but everybody sat where he might, had his own little cruet-stand, and never troubled his neighbors for the necessary condiments. No servants waited on us. The cellar was on the sideboard. Each guest picked out the wines that he liked best, and put the bottle by him when he took his chair. The dogs dined with us, and friends' dogs were welcome. People who could not speak English spoke French; and Englishmen in the same predicament stuck to their own language, — expressive pantomime being used on either side in illustration of the meaning. Anybody who felt the heat was requested to take off his coat and dine in his shirt-sleeves. Any guest, particularly skilled in the preparation of a special dish, went into the kitchen and helped the cook. Sometimes Gassier stuffed the tomatoes and Fechter brought up the dish. We had every variety of French cookery, — and twice we put the inexhaustible resources of gastronomic France to the test by dining on one article of food only, presented under many different forms. We had a potato dinner in six courses, and an egg dinner in eight courses. Never did the perfect freedom and gayety of the talk suffer shipwreck on the perilous rocks of religion and politics. A disputatious man would not have had a chance of using his tongue at that table.

The gushes of merriment were as inexhaustible as the gushes of garlic. The smoking began, as the smoking always should begin, the moment dinner was

over. With the appearance of the coffee, the amusements of the evening took a new turn. Guests possessed of special accomplishments now assumed a prominent place. Friendly singers and musicians, well known to the public, showed us what their art could do. Fechter's never flagging gayety exhibited him in a new character, — as a low comedian and a mimic. He played, for instance, a little French scene — in which the persons were a thief under examination, and a *juge d'instruction* completely baffled by the dense stupidity of the prisoner — with a perfection of quaint humor not to be forgotten, and not to be described. Equally irresistible were his imitations of the elder Dumas writing one of his magnificent novels in a race against time, and of another far less illustrious literary man trying to shave himself in a state of intoxication. Equal to Fechter in fertility of resource, the kind-hearted, genial Gassier was ready to sing any operatic music within the reach of his fine baritone voice, and was so skilled a musician that he invented his own accompaniment on the piano when memory and music-books happened to fail him.

In the intervals of these special entertainments, actors deservedly eminent on the French stage interested us by talk of their art, and by remembrances of their famous colleagues. That accomplished and elegant comedian, Berton the elder, told us how they worked at the rehearsals of "The Demi-monde." Maurice Desrieux — the most lovable and most affectionate of men, the wise, patient, and devoted friend of Fechter — described the strain laid on his dramatic

resources by the dangerous situations in the fourth act of Sardou's "Maison Neuve," in which the main responsibility rested on the character which he played in the piece. Of these three variously gifted men, — Gassier, Berton, Desrieux, — not one survives. Shall I write of other guests, and perhaps recall more pleasant voices that are now silent forever? Once more the shadow of Death darkens my view of the past. It is time to have done.

When I visited the United States in the years 1873–4, Fechter's was the first face I saw on disembarking at the wharf. We went together to my hotel in New York, and he gave me the benefit of his experience in ordering my first American dinner. He left me at night with a parting flash of the old gayety. "You will find friends here, wherever you go," he said; "Don't forget that I was the friend who introduced you to Soft Shell Crab."

But there was a change — a melancholy change — in him, which I soon discovered. Although he shrank from confessing it, signs not to be mistaken told me that he was brooding over his wasted opportunities and his doubtful future. The happiest days of his life were now passed at his little farm in Pennsylvania. There I visited him, sincerely regretting that public engagements limited me to a sojourn of a few days only. In my travels afterwards, whenever we could meet we did meet. When I left New York for the last time, he dined with me. The two or three other friends who were of the party remarked the depression of his spirits. We parted, — not to meet again.

I wish I could add to these last words some of the letters addressed to me by Fechter, which I have thought it right to preserve. Even these are not only too personal to be presented to the public, but they are, in many places, so expressed (unconsciously on his part, it is needless to say) as to be in danger of leading to erroneous impressions of him in the minds of strangers.

This memorial portrait of Fechter would not be improved as a likeness by borrowing his own words.

Writing to me on the death of a friend whom we both dearly loved, Charles Dickens says, "We must close the ranks and march on." On a dreary English winter day I close these pages, and escape from my recollections by turning to my work.

WILKIE COLLINS.

LONDON, 18th January, 1882.

PRESS NOTICES

ON

FECHTER'S ACTING.

PRESS NOTICES ON FECHTER'S ACTING.

THE distinguished artist, whose name is prefixed to these remarks, purposes to leave England for a professional tour in the United States. A few words from me, in reference to his merits as an actor, I hope may not be uninteresting to some readers, in advance of his publicly proving them before an American audience, and I know will not be unacceptable to my intimate friend. I state at once that Mr. Fechter holds that relation towards me; not only because it is the fact, but also because our friendship originated in my public appreciation of him. I had studied his acting closely, and had admired it highly, both in Paris and in London, years before we exchanged a word. Consequently, my appreciation is not the result of personal regard, but personal regard has sprung out of my appreciation.

The first quality observable in Mr. Fechter's acting is, that it is in the highest degree romantic. However elaborated in minute details, there is always a peculiar dash and vigor in it, like the fresh atmosphere of the story whereof it is a part. When he is on the stage, it seems to me as though the story were transpiring before me for the first and last time. Thus there is a

fervor in his love-making — a suffusion of his whole being with the rapture of his passion — that sheds a glory on its object, and raises her, before the eyes of the audience, into the light in which he sees her.

It was this remarkable power that took Paris by storm, when he became famous in the lover's part in the "Dame aux Camélias." It is a short part, really comprised in two scenes; but, as he acted it (he was its original representative), he left its poetic and exalting influence on the heroine throughout the play. A woman who could be so beloved, who could be so devotedly and romantically adored, had a hold upon the general sympathy with which nothing less absorbing and complete could have invested her.

When I first saw this play and this actor, I could not, in forming my lenient judgment of the heroine, forget that she had been the inspiration of a passion of which I had beheld such profound and affecting marks. I said to myself, as a child might have said: "A bad woman could not have been the object of that wonderful tenderness, could not have subdued that worshipping heart, could not have drawn such tears from such a lover." I am persuaded that the same effect was wrought upon the Parisian audiences, both consciously and unconsciously, to a very great extent, and that what was morally disagreeable in the "Dame aux Camélias" first got lost in this brilliant halo of romance. I have seen the same play with the same part otherwise acted, and in exact degree as the love became dull and earthy, the heroine descended from her pedestal.

In "Ruy Blas," in "The Master of Ravenswood,"

and in "The Lady of Lyons," — three dramas in which Mr. Fechter especially shines as a lover, — but notably in the first, this remarkable power of surrounding the beloved creature, in the eyes of the audience, with the fascination that she has for him, is strikingly displayed. That observer must be cool indeed who does not feel, when *Ruy Blas* stands in the presence of the young unwedded *Queen of Spain*, that the air is enchanted; or when she bends over him, leaving her tender touch upon his bloody breast, that it is better so to die than to live apart from her, and that she is worthy to be so died for. When the *Master of Ravenswood* declares his love for *Lucy Ashton*, and she hers for him, and when, in a burst of rapture, he kisses the skirt of her dress, we feel as though we touched it with our lips to stay our goddess from soaring away into the very heavens. And when they plight their troth and break the piece of gold, it is we — not *Edgar* — who quickly exchange our half for the half she was about to hang around her neck, solely because the latter has for an instant touched the bosom we so dearly love. Again, in "The Lady of Lyons," the picture on the easel in the poor cottage studio is not the unfinished portrait of a vain and arrogant girl, but becomes the sketch of a soul's high ambition and aspiration here and hereafter.

Picturesqueness is a quality above all others pervading Mr. Fechter's assumptions. Himself a skilled painter and sculptor, learned in the history of costume, and informing those accomplishments and that knowledge with a similar infusion of romance (for romance is inseparable from the man), he is always a picture, —

always a picture in its right place in the group, always in true composition with the background of the scene. For picturesqueness of manner, note so trivial a thing as the turn of his hand in beckoning from a window, in "Ruy Blas," to a personage down in an outer court-yard to come up; or his assumption of the *Duke's* livery in the same scene; or his writing a letter from dictation. In the last scene of Victor Hugo's noble drama, his bearing becomes positively inspired; and his sudden assumption of the attitude of the headsman, in his denunciation of the *Duke* and threat to be his executioner, is, so far as I know, one of the most ferociously picturesque things conceivable on the stage.

The foregoing use of the word *ferociously* reminds me to remark that this artist is a master of passionate vehemence; in which aspect he appears to me to represent, perhaps more than any other, an interesting union of characteristics of two great nations, the French and the Anglo-Saxon.[1] Born in London of a French mother, by a German father, but reared entirely in England and in France, there is, in his fury, a combination of French suddenness and impressibility with our more slowly demonstrative Anglo-Saxon way when we get, as we say, "our blood up," that produces an intensely fiery result. The fusion of two races is in it, and one cannot decidedly say that it belongs to either; but one can most decidedly say that it belongs to a powerful concentration of human passion and emotion, and to human nature.

[1] This is a mistake; Fechter's mother was Piemontese.

Mr. Fechter has been in the main more accustomed to speak French than to speak English, and therefore he speaks our language with a French accent. But whosoever would suppose that he does not speak English fluently, plainly, distinctly, and with a perfect understanding of the meaning, weight, and value of every word, would be greatly mistaken. Not only is his knowledge of English — extending to the most subtle idiom or the most recondite cant phrase — more extensive than that of many of us who have English for our mother tongue, but his delivery of Shakespeare's blank verse is remarkable, facile, musical, and intelligent. To be in a sort of pain for him, as one sometimes is for a foreigner speaking English, or to be in any doubt of his having twenty synonymes at his tongue's end if he should want one, is out of the question after having been of his audience.

A few words of two of his Shakespearian impersonations, and I shall have indicated enough in advance of Mr. Fechter's presentation of himself. That quality of picturesqueness, on which I have already laid stress, is strikingly developed in his *Iago;* and yet it is so judiciously governed that his *Iago* is not in the least picturesque according to the conventional ways of frowning, sneering, diabolically grinning, and elaborately doing everything else that would induce *Othello* to run him through the body very early in the play. Mr. Fechter is the *Iago* who could and did make friends; who could dissect his master's soul without flourishing his scalpel as if it were a walking-stick; who could overpower *Emilia* by other arts than a sign of

the Saracen's Head grimness; who could be a boon companion without *ipso facto* warning all beholders off by the portentous phenomenon; who could sing a song and clink a can naturally enough, and stab men really in the dark, — not in a transparent notification of himself as going about seeking whom to stab. Mr. Fechter's *Iago* is no more in the conventional psychological mode than in the conventional hussar pantaloons and boots; and you shall see the picturesqueness of his wearing borne out in his bearing all through the tragedy, down to the moment when he becomes invincibly and consistently dumb.

Perhaps no innovation in art was ever accepted with so much favor by so many intellectual persons, precommitted to and preoccupied by another system, as Mr. Fechter's *Hamlet*. I take this to have been the case (as it unquestionably was in London), not because of its picturesqueness, not because of its novelty, not because of its many scattered beauties, but because of its perfect consistency with itself. As the animal painter said of his favorite picture of rabbits, that "there was more nature about those rabbits than you usually found in rabbits," so it may be said of Mr. Fechter's *Hamlet*, that there was more consistency about that *Hamlet* than you usually found in *Hamlets*.

Its great and satisfying originality was in its possessing the merit of a distinctly conceived and executed idea. From the first appearance of the broken glass of fashion and mould of form, pale and worn with weeping for his father's death, and remotely suspicious of its cause, to his final struggle with *Horatio* for the fatal

cup, there were cohesion and coherence in Mr. Fechter's view of the character.

Devrient, the German actor, had, some years before in London, fluttered the theatrical doves considerably by such changes as being seated when instructing the players, and like mild departures from established usage; but he had worn, in the main, the old nondescript dress, and had held forth, in the main, in the old way, hovering between sanity and madness. I do not remember whether he wore his hair crisply curled short, as if he were going to an everlasting dancing-master's party at the Danish Court, but I do remember that most other *Hamlets* since the great Kemble have been bound to do so. Mr. Fechter's *Hamlet*, a pale woe-begone Norseman with long flaxen hair, wearing a strange garb never associated with the part upon the English stage (if ever seen there at all), and making a piratical swoop upon the whole fleet of little theatrical prescriptions without meaning, — or, like Dr. Johnson's celebrated friend, with only one idea in them and that a wrong one, — never could have achieved its extraordinary success but for its animation by one pervading purpose to which all changes were made intelligibly subservient. The bearing of this purpose on the treatment of *Ophelia*, on the death of *Polonius*, and on the old student fellowship between *Hamlet* and *Horatio*, was exceedingly striking; and the difference between picturesqueness of stage arrangement for mere stage effect, and for the elucidation of a meaning, was well displayed in there having been a gallery of musicians at the play, and in one of them passing, on his way out,

with his instrument in his hand, when *Hamlet*, seeing it, took it from him to point his talk with *Rosencrantz* and *Guildenstern*.

This leads me to the observation with which I have all along desired to conclude: that Mr. Fechter's romance and picturesqueness are always united to a true artist's intelligence and a true artist's training in a true artist's spirit. He became one of the company at the Théâtre Français when he was a very young man, and he has cultivated his natural gifts in the best schools. I cannot wish my friend a better audience than he will have in the American people, and I cannot wish them a better actor than they will have in my friend.

CHARLES DICKENS.

[*Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1869.]

THERE was something so decidedly novel in Mr. Fechter's performance of *Hamlet*, and it so long remained a subject of interest, not only with his admirers but with those who questioned the correctness of his theory, that the announcement of his intended appearance as *Othello*, made several months since, has proved a source of general curiosity among the large body of literary playgoers who properly regard the representations of Shakespeare's characters as the highest test of histrionic excellence. Whether the more impassioned *Othello*, prompt in physical action, would appear to

greater or less advantage under his treatment than the more reflective *Hamlet*, infirm of purpose, all might be certain that nothing commonplace or conventional would be witnessed, but that an intellectual and conscientious artist would present them with an interpretation not founded on stage tradition, but derived solely from a study of Shakespeare's text. Nor was curiosity disappointed by the fact that a private performance of "Othello," too complete to be termed a rehearsal, took place on Thursday night, in the presence of a numerous though select audience. Indeed, those who did not belong to the exclusive party on Tuesday were eager yesterday morning to question their more privileged friends; and the anxiety to know the result of the first public performance, which took place last night, was rather heightened than quenched by the partial revelations of the previous evening.

An edition of "Othello," by Mr. Fechter, circulated on Tuesday and now regularly published, sufficed to show that in the entire conduct of the play a completely new ground would be taken. There is not in this edition a single explanatory note, but the minute stage directions, which even describe the emotions to be portrayed, amount to a psychological comment on the tragedy. German dramatists, of the Kotzebue school, wrote and printed their own stage directions on a similar principle, and have sometimes been ridiculed on that account, as they were charged with endeavoring to conceal the poverty of their dialogue by the wealth of their rubric. No such ridicule can attach to Mr. Fechter, who interprets an author already estab-

lished as classical, and who wishes to show by precept, as well as by example, his notions how "Othello" ought to be represented.

The theory of Mr. Fechter, practically manifested last night, is not to be sought merely in his own performance of the principal character. The *Iago* of Mr. Ryder and the *Desdemona* of Miss Leclercq must be regarded as embodying to a certain extent the conceptions of the ingenious innovator; for they must have been forced to unlearn all they retained of stage traditions before they could move easily in the path prescribed for them in the rehearsals. All these details of action which are technically expressed by the word *business* have been changed, and the work is presented under an aspect entirely new. People sit where they were wont to stand, are scattered about where they used to be huddled together, and reformed into picturesque groups where they once were marshalled into unvarying straight lines. When *Othello* hears the first insinuations of *Iago* he is quietly writing his despatches at a table; when *Iago* utters his satire against woman, he is leaning on a pillar with his merry listeners gathered around him; when the death of *Roderigo* takes place, it is with all the preparation and circumstances of a grand melodramatic murder; and so on through the entire piece, — having in his preface declared war against "tradition" as the worm-eaten and unwholesome prison where dramatic art languishes in fetters.

[*London Times*, Oct. 24, 1861.]

Mr. Fechter skilfully simulates the tenderness and devotion of a new-made husband. The rapid transition of feeling, as he suddenly passes from the happy dalliance of love to the stern business of the camp, is also well marked; and his severe reproof to his officers for managing their private and domestic quarrels in a town of war, where the people's hearts are brimful of fear, is delivered with impressive dignity of tone, manner, and aspect. The third act is, as every one knows, the grandest and most sublime in the tragedy. The beauties of Mr. Fechter's acting in this all-important portion of the play are neither few nor trivial. His blank look of horror when his torturer first infuses the poison of suspicion by means of the perfidious suggestion, "She did deceive her father, marrying you;" his attempt to shake off his misgivings as a fearful dream; his struggle to speak calmly while his agony is revealed by the little movements of his hands, the twitching of the muscles of his face, and the slight but fearful trembling of his veins; the brief return of love to his bursting heart when *Desdemona* approaches him; and the bitter anguish with which he refers to the afflictions he could have borne had his wife but remained true to him, — are all thrillingly visible to those whose proximity to the stage enables them to observe closely the play of the actor's features, and the significance of his minutest gesture. The profound dejection of his voice and manner when, in reply to *Iago's* proffers of sympathy, he exclaims with a sigh like a spasm, "Not a jot, not a jot," is perfectly heart-breaking; and the proud disdain which

swells in his bosom when he utters the humiliating words, "Set on thy wife to observe" is finely conceived and forcibly expressed. But his mode of exclaiming "O fool! fool! fool!" when he discovers how he has been abused, like one awakening from a trance of horrors of which he is scarcely conscious, and his last sad retrospect of the sorrows of his life and of the angelic qualities of his lost love, are most impressive; as also is the wild despair with which he hangs over the body of *Desdemona* and vainly calls upon her by name.

[*London Morning Post*, Oct. 21, 1861.]

THE success which attended Mr. Fechter's assumption of the character of *Hamlet* last season completely accounts for the curiosity of the public, demonstrated in an unusually crowded house which was exhibited last night when he attempted *Othello*. The fact that Mr. Fechter played *Hamlet* seventy-five times proves the effect of his performance upon the general public. That he made a deep impression upon the most intellectual of playgoers, — and moreover upon a class of persons who of late have been accustomed to look upon theatrical exhibitions with a feeling nearly akin to contempt, — is also well known to most of those who have the opportunity of forming correct opinions on such matters.

In the first two acts *Othello* has little to do; but in these, in the dignity with which he receives the reproaches of *Brabantio*, and in the frank, easy, yet persuasive delivery of the apology, the true dramatic artist could be seen. In the scene in which *Othello* interrupts and reproves the drunkenness of *Cassio*, the assumption of dignity to which we have been accustomed, and which was wanting in Mr. Fechter, was undoubtedly more effective, but less true to a natural view of the character. It is by the third act that every *Othello* must be tested. Here a striking change has been introduced; it is not till late in the scene that *Othello* is made to yield to a suspicion of his wife's falsehood. He appears first to disregard or to utterly misunderstand the innuendoes of *Iago*, then to accept them as general reflections not applicable to himself any more than to any one else. Next, as they are reiterated, he becomes, in the simple honesty of his nature, completely puzzled; but not till *Iago* alludes to *Brabantio's* early warning, in the lines "She did deceive her father, marrying you," does the actual suspicion strike him, as with a thunderstruck expression he exclaims, "And so she did." Mr. Fechter's utterance of "Not a jot, not a jot," was remarkably expressive, and drew forth one of the loudest bursts of applause of the evening. It is just after this that he catches a sight of his black face in the glass; and, as *Iago* proceeds, he continually glances in the direction of the mirror, till he is worked up to request *Iago* to set on *Emilia* "to observe,"— immediately after suggesting which, an expression of the deepest shame breaks over his countenance. This new treat-

ment of the scene affords room not for so much energy as we have witnessed, but for numerous delicate and subtle touches. Again, in the subsequent scene, the Farewell is accompanied with action most varied and expressive. The eager look with which *Othello* drinks in *Iago's* story of *Cassio's* dream was a remarkable instance of facial expression, and the agitation and excitement that goes on increasing throughout this scene was finely marked. Another fine passage was the Handkerchief scene with *Desdemona*. The intense expectation with which he watched the result of his first enquiry, the doubts, the delight with which for a moment he drew her to his bosom, where she says "it is not lost," with his subsequent repulse of her, and the towering passion of his demand for its production, were most effective; and the picture formed by the sudden appearance of *Emilia*, just as his arm is raised to strike *Desdemona*, made a most fitting close to this part of the scene. The fourth act, — where he receives the letter from the Senate, and behaves with such violence to his wife, — whilst equally effective, was rendered less than ordinarily painful by the evident strong feeling by which every tone and movement appears to be dictated.

[*London Morning Herald*, Oct. 24, 1861.]

It is not until the third act that Mr. Fechter puts forth any of his powers, and up to that period many celebrated speeches, hitherto known as points, fall

flatly enough upon the ear. The Address to the Senate for instance, which has for so long held an Enfield's Speakerish celebrity on oration days at minor schools, is divested of all that rotundity of eloquence and pompous manner hitherto allotted to it. In Mr. Fechter's mouth it is simply an honest apology for a natural action colloquially delivered. In the second act, too, there is nothing specially noticeable saving the overweening tenderness invariably displayed to *Desdemona*, and the purely natural savage tone in which the "noisy bell" is ordered to be silenced, during the drunken quarrel between *Cassio* and *Montano*. But the whole of the third act, as far as *Othello* is concerned, sparkles into original genius when *Iago* first asks about *Cassio's* acquaintance with *Desdemona*. *Othello* answers him lightly. He is looking over some papers, and speaks at first almost at random. Then, finding his interlocutor repeating his phrases and harping with full power on certain words, he rallies him lightly and playfully. Not even when the suggestion of his wife's infidelity is made, does he wince, until *Iago* reminds him of the manner in which she deceives her father. Then his face falls, and the avowal "And so she did," comes in dreary heart-broken accents from between his parted lips. The entire scene is replete with beauties. Nothing can be finer than the touch of nature conveyed in the tone in which he replies "Not a jot, not a jot," when *Iago* hints that he has dashed his spirits; nothing more suggestive than the abrupt stop which the noble-hearted *Moor* comes to when the hint, so loathsome to his real nature, — that *Emilia* should be set on to watch *Desdemona*, — first rises to his

lips; nothing grander than the gradual rousing of his rage during *Iago's* recital of *Cassio's* dream, and the vehement burst with which he declares that he *will* be satisfied of his wife's fidelity.

It is in touches of this kind — and there are dozens of them throughout the play — that Mr. Fechter's genius is shown.

[*London Daily News*, Oct. 24, 1861.]

In the third act, and especially in the scene where his jealousy is first aroused by *Iago*, the powers of the actor began to be displayed. Nothing could be finer than the constrained calmness with which he attempts to defend himself from the accusation of being depressed by the suspicions the tempter has aroused in his mind. The apparently commonplace words "Not a jot, not a jot" were never uttered in a tone of truer pathos. Then again when, more and more persuaded of his wife's infidelity, he begs *Iago* to place *Emilia* as a spy upon *Desdemona*, the expression of shame and anguish that immediately followed was most finely rendered. Both these points were at once observed by the audience, and the applause elicited was of the most enthusiastic character.

In the second scene of the fourth act, too, *Othello's* burst of tender pathos, after denouncing *Desdemona* as false, had all the effect of a sudden inspiration, and touched the sympathies of the entire house. In the

last act Mr. Fechter gave singular significance to the opening lines of the scene, "It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul," by glancing at himself in the mirror as he spoke, as though exposing *Desdemona's* frailty by the color of his face, — thus recurring to an idea expressed in a previous part of the play.

Throughout the representation it was easy to see that an original mind had been at work, and this not only in one character but in all; and we believe we are justified in stating that to Mr. Fechter are due the many novelties introduced into the stage arrangements of the piece. Nearly all, in fact, of what is called by actors the business of the tragedy, is entirely new.

[*London Daily Telegraph*, Oct. 24, 1861.]

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